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ABSTRACT

This report describes the second phase of a study of the transformations students make in their written texts as they write from sources in a given discipline. Phase 1 of the study examined how students performed the task of writing a critique of a scholarly article in sociology and how their efforts were evaluated by professors in the discipline. Phase 2 examined changes in students' knowledge of critique from one year to the next. Six of the 32 students involved in the first phase of the study agreed to participate in the second phase. Subjects reread the scholarly article they had read a year earlier in the first phase and constructed a second, newly written critique. As in the first phase, the configuration of topics and comments in each student's critique was mapped out to depict the flow of the total discourse. Results indicated that all but one of the students wrote critiques that focused on topics that differed from those they selected the previous year; for example, three students who originally disagreed with the source article were more supportive of it, and two of the students who had agreed with the content of the article the previous year disagreed. Overall, the students were still including proportionally more suspended judgment in their critiques than either positive or negative evaluative commentary. Analysis of interviews with the students showed that classroom environment and new knowledge contributed to some of the changes in students' texts. (Nine figures and four tables of data are included; the text template and a student critique are attached. Contains 64 references.) (RS)

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ED 366 951

FINAL REPORT

Project 9
(Study 2, Phase 2)

WRITING FROM ACADEMIC SOURCES

Critiquing Texts in Sociology: A Longitudinal Study

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December, 1993

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Project 9, Study 2, Phase 2

Critiquing texts in sociology: A longitudinal study

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Reading and writing can be powerful tools for the acquisition of disciplinary knowledge. Instructors may assign writing tasks to facilitate the ways of knowing in a discipline (Faigley & Hansen, 1985; Herrington, 1985) --what content and methodologies are valued, and how these might be expressed through specialized discourse (Spivey & Mathison, in preparation). They may also stimulate students to think like authorities, to take on the role of "professional-in-training" as they solve problems and construct positions that reside within the concerns of the discipline (Walvoord & McCarthy, 1990).

One of the foci of research on student performance when writing from sources has been on difference. These studies have compared: (1) the strategies experts and novices employ when solving ill-defined problems (Ackerman, 1990; Flower & Hayes, 1980, 1981, 1984; Hayes & Flower, 1980); (2) the effects of various tasks on the processes and products of reading and writing (Durst, 1987; Greene, 1993; Langer & Applebee, 1987); (3) the variation of student performance when completing the same task (Mathison, 1993; McGinley, 1992; Nelson, 1990; Spivey, 1984, 1991); and (4) the difference in performance of the same task between disciplines (Jolliffe & Brier, 1988). While these studies have provided valuable insights into students' interpretations and realizations of tasks they have examined performance at one point in time. An exception is a longitudinal study by Spivey and Mathison (1993; in preparation). This research tracked six psychology majors over the course of their undergraduate careers, examining changes in their perceptions of, and performance in, the discipline. Students' disciplinary knowledge changed over time as they took on its ways of knowing. Results suggested that these changes can be seen in how students complete particular tasks, incorporating the tenets and methods that are valued in a particular academic community. Students learning the ways of knowing in a discipline used their knowledge to craft texts that reflected not only their personal goals, but the goals of the community.

Thus, as readers who are writers compose they select particular information over other information. Some information is foregrounded while other information is backgrounded (Spivey, 1990). Readers who are writers select information based upon their background knowledge (Ackerman, 1989, 1991; Jolliffe & Brier, 1988; Langer, 1986), their perspective (Cochran, 1993; Stein, 1993), and their task interpretation (Flower et al., 1990; Greene, 1990, 1993; Mathison, 1993, in preparation; Spivey, 1984, 1991), to identify a few of the influences on selectivity. One individual's act of reading-to write, then, is unique from another's act of reading-to-write. In terms of reading, it is known that because a reader's knowledge, perspective, and interpretation of tasks differ over time and context, one reading of the same text will vary from the next. Different information will be foregrounded and backgrounded as aspects of the reader and the reading situation change. Each act of reading will differ from the previous as some parts of a text are more relevant than others to a reader at a particular time, in a particular context (Bartlett, 1932).

While Bartlett (1932) and others (Iser, 1978; Sprio, 1977) have been interested in the constructive act of reading, the research reported here investigates the tranformations students in an academic discipline make in their *written* texts as they write from sources. Writing from sources is a hybrid act whereby readers construct meaning from cues in a written text in order to originate a written text of their own (Bracewell, Bracewell, & Frederiksen, 1982). As a hybrid act, permutations that occur in a students' written text may suggest transformations of knowledge, discursive and disciplinary. This study, then, investigates changes in students' knowledge of written critique from one year to the next, examining how students learn to take on disciplinary ways of thinking: how they select and evaluate information, and how they support positions with convincing evidence. In addition, the study renders insight into why students' texts may have changed.

Phase 1 of Study 2 (Mathison, 1993; Mathison & Spivey, 1993) examined how 32 students performed the task of writing a critique in sociology and how their efforts were evaluated by professors in the discipline. Results showed a range of critical dimension, from summary-like responses to the source text to actual challenges to the authors' theoretical approach. Students who wrote more negatively about the source article basing their critique on sociological principles received higher quality ratings from professors than those who wrote positively about the source article. Students who received the lowest scores were those that provided personal responses to the article based upon anecdotal evidence or personal beliefs. According to one professor, these students seemed to be "pontificating" rather than examining the relevance of the content of the article to the discipline. Although upper-level students tended to receive higher quality ratings, grade level was not a significant predictor for quality, nor was a student's status of major and non-major in sociology. Students' discourse-based interviews revealed an awareness of having to "sound sociological" but at the same time provide personal insights, a balance many of them found difficult.

Phase 2 examined changes in students' knowledge of critique from one year to the next. Data collected in this phase was parallel to that collected during the initial phase in order to examine changes in disciplinary and discourse knowledge from year one to year two. Six students who participated in Phase 1 of the study agreed to participate in Phase 2.

Method

Participants

Six of the 32 students from the initial study reread the article and constructed a second, newly written critique. Of the original 32 students, 17 had either graduated or withdrawn from the university. The 15 students that remained were contacted and 6 of these students agreed to participate in the study. As seen in Table 1, of the 6 students, 4 were seniors, 1 was a junior, and 1 was a sophomore at the time of data collection. Two of the students, Ted and Theresa, were majoring in sociology. Another student, Amy, was majoring in religious studies. Enya, was a double major in political science and religious studies. All of the above students were seniors. Another student, Sally, was a junior. She had been majoring in sociology but the year of data collection she had been accepted into the school of social work. Finally, Hannah, a sophomore, was a creative writing major.

As seen in Table 1, students' experience in sociology varied, with Ted reporting having taken seven courses and Enya reporting having taken only one--the course in which the data from Phase 1 was collected. Five of the students, according to self-report, were better-than-average-students in sociology. Their grade point averages (GPA) were above the 3.0 level. Theresa, however, did not report the courses she had taken and the grades she received for them. This is interesting given that she had declined to be a case-study student during Phase 1 because she did not want to divulge her grades.

Two students, Amy and Enya, had taken courses in religious studies, which although offered in a different department may have provided them more background on religious issues. Amy reported taking approximately fifteen courses in religious studies and Enya reported taking three classes.

These six students represented a broad range of ability in writing the critique, as judged by the quality scores given them by professors in sociology. In Phase 1 of the Project 9, four professors in sociology rated the 32 critiques (on a scale of 1-5, with five being the highest indication of quality). Scores ranged from 4 to 18. The average quality score was 11. The six students participating in Phase 2 received scores on their first critique that ranged from 9 to 16, with Ted receiving the highest quality score and Hannah and Sally receiving the lowest scores.

Table 1
Educational Information on Individual Students

Student	Major	Year in School	Number of Courses in Sociology	GPA in Sociology Courses	Quality Score
Amy	Religious studies	Sr.	2	3.6	14
Enya	Pol. sci./Rel. St.	Sr.	1	4.0	14
Hannah	Creative writing	Soph.	3	3.0	9
Sally	Social work	Jr.	4	3.6	9
Ted	Sociology	Sr.	7	3.3	16
Theresa	Sociology	Sr.	NA	NA	10

Materials

Source text. The source text for the study was a scholarly article from an edited volume, *In Gods We Trust* (Robbins & Anthony, 1991). This was the same article students had read for Phase 1 of the study. The text deals with a topic that is part of the curriculum for the course, in particular, aspects of tradition and modernity in people's religious lives. The article, "On the Margins of the Sacred" by Larry R. Greil and David L. Rudy, challenges standard definitions of religion with an alternative definition of religion-- quasi-religion. Quasi-religions call the traditional Judeo-Christian approach to sociological religious theory into question and offer an alternative view of what counts as religion. The authors claim that current approaches to religion are objectivist in intent and believe that in order for someone to be religious, she or he must believe in a transcendent world. They claim that a proper definition of religion should be subjectivist and based not on predetermined categories but on what an individual believes is religious. Greil and Rudy advance

their position by providing examples of quasi-religious organizations and groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Transcendental Meditation that function, in their eyes, as religions because they fulfill the spiritual needs of people in a contemporary, secularized society. The authors claim that traditional religions do not serve the needs of a modern society.

This novel definition departs from currently held definitions of religion in the field and thus the critique assignment serves to make students think through the concept and determine its value as an approach to understanding religion. It is 13 pages and approximately 14,000 words in length.

The semantic content of the source text was parsed into content units adapting Witte's (1983) procedure for analyzing the topical structure of texts and Shuy's (1982) topic-comment analysis of discourse. Combined, these two approaches provided a framework for constructing a template of the source text.

The method of analysis used the TOPIC of a sentence as the unit to chart the directionality of information in a text. The TOPIC of a sentence is not necessarily the grammatical subject of a sentence, but rather, functions as the focus of the discourse. For Witte (1983), a TOPIC is, broadly defined, "what the sentence is about." (p. 314). Shuy (1982), in his topical analysis of discourse, followed the frameworks of topic-comment analysis described by Chafe (1972) and Kates (1980). In these cases, a TOPIC was not defined by "grammatical relations of the terms" (p. 114) but by content and logic. Both definitions of TOPIC are similar to those that other researchers have used to study the development of discourse throughout a text (i.e., Giora, 1979; van Dijk, 1979).

Witte's procedure, based on the work of Mathesius (1928) and other linguists of the Prague School (e.g., Danes, 1974), provides a means by which the semantic relationship of individual sentence TOPICS to the text's controlling theme, or *discourse topic*, as Witte calls it, can be described. Says Witte (1983): "The particular *sentence topics* which appear in a text probably result directly from the writer's implicit sense of the *discourse topic* and from the writer's decisions about how to make the *discourse topic* accessible to the reader" (p. 318). Shuy (1982) believes that, "[b]y mapping the topics . . . . one can obtain a macro picture of one aspect of the structure . . . . which highlights the cognitive thrust of its direction" (p. 115).

While Witte (1983) was primarily interested in using TOPIC to study *discourse topic* development, Shuy (1982) applied both TOPIC and COMMENT to depict the flow of the total discourse, that is, not only what TOPICS were brought up for conversation, but how they were responded to. Thus, the term COMMENT refers to that which is said about the TOPIC, or can be thought of as a response to a TOPIC. Together, these two discursive components, TOPIC-COMMENT, allow for a study of the distribution of information throughout a text and chart the flow of responses to that information. (For the source text template parsed in the manner described above, see Appendix A.)

For this study, as was done in Phase 1, the size of the content unit was based on the sentence. It consisted of the thematic discourse TOPIC of a sentence and its related COMMENT. A content unit had to be broad enough to allow for a mapping of its relationship to the discourse topic yet specific enough to represent its different treatment at various points in a text. Take, for example, the sentence: "It will be immediately obvious that it is impossible to define quasi-religions without coming first to an understanding about what we mean by religion." To meet the criterion of specificity, the TOPIC would have to include not only the key term QUASI-RELIGION,

which would be too broad, but the term DEFINITION as well, in order to provide a more qualified focus. The COMMENT, or what is said about the TOPIC, would include the information that is about the TOPIC. Thus, the above sentence would become the following content unit:

(T) Quasi-religion-definition
(C) Is contingent upon a definition of religion

In some cases, the same TOPIC (for instance, QUASI-RELIGION-DEFINITION) may change focus in a text. To address this different treatment, another descriptor would be included in the TOPIC to reflect this shift. For example, the TOPIC of the sentence, "Thus, one possible use of the term quasi-religion would be to effect a compromise between supporters of substantive definitions of religion and supporters of functional definitions of religion," is, on a broad level, QUASI-RELIGION-DEFINITION. But to specify this TOPIC further, (1) would be added to illustrate that a first working definition of the term has been given. The TOPIC-COMMENT sequence would be:

(T) Quasi-religion-definition (1)
(C) Is a compromise between substantive and functional supporters' views

Later on in the text, a second working definition is given, and this is represented as QUASI-RELIGION-DEFINITION (2). Thus, key terms of one TOPIC may be embedded within other TOPICS. The total number of content units from the source text was 216. Each text was analyzed for its TOPIC-COMMENT (T-C) sequences.

As discussed earlier, TOPICS signal the focus of a content unit. That is, when writers select TOPICS for commentary, they construct configurations of information that charts the flow of their critique. All together there were 5 central TOPICS in the source text, under which all other TOPICS were embedded. These central TOPICS were: 1) Quasi-religion; 2) Quasi-religious organizations; 3) Religion; 4) Religious; and 5) Nonreligious. Each of these TOPICS could be combined with other TOPICS to signal another level of discussion, as Table 1 shows. The higher the level (e.g., 4), the more detail about the TOPIC. For example, the TOPIC, quasi-religion is the focus of a sentence at a general level when it stands by itself (QR). But at other points it can be brought into a more detailed focus of discussion when combined with other TOPICS (QR-D-[1]). In this case, there are 2 additional levels of discussion, one signaling the inclusion of definition (D) and the other to specify which definition is the focus (1). Thus, in this example, the authors are focusing on the first definition of a quasi-religion, which is at level 2 in Table 1. As Table 2 shows, there were 41 different combinations of TOPICS in the source text, each indicating a different focus of discussion of the 5 central TOPICS. The majority of the discussion in the source text focuses on quasi-religious organizations.

Table 2

TOPICS and their Levels of Discussion in Source Text*

Central TOPICS	1	2	3	4
QR	D			
	D	(1)		
	D	(2)		
O-QR	sh	AA		
	sh	CF		
	p	est		
	c	SFF		
	na	X		
	na	L		
	na	TM		
	F			
	G			
	ITO			
	IA			
	RL	v	N	
	RL	v	CL	
	RL	v	NN	
	RL	v	M	
	RL	v	J	
	RL	g	P	
	NRL	v	M	
	NRL	v	NN	
	NRL	v	B	
	NRL	v	J	
	S			
	I			
R	D			
	D	f		
	D	s		
	D	f	v	
	D	f	g	
	D	s	v	
	D	s	g	
	D	am		
	D	s	f	E
	D	t		
	D	b		
K	D	am		
NK	D	am		

* for a list of abbreviations and their meanings see pages 7-8.

Data Collection

Data collection took place during spring semester, 1993, one year after the data from Phase 1 was collected. Students were given a fresh copy of the source

article and told to reread it, constructing a new, second critique following the same guidelines that were given for the first critique. These instructions were given orally in class by the instructor. Students were told:

> For next Thursday you are to hand in a critique of the Greil article, "On the Margins of the Sacred." It is good we didn't discuss it because I want your fresh responses to it. So, in fact, we won't discuss it in class until you've written about it. I want two pages, typed (with margins), in which you respond to this paper and its ideas.

Students were given as much time as they needed to complete the task of reading the Greil and Rudy article and writing an essay evaluating it. An interview was conducted immediately afterward in which students compared their initial critique with their new one, focusing on aspects of the texts that were different and/or similar, providing reasons for those differences and similarities. During the interview, students also provided information concerning the task of critique and the role of writing in sociology. The interviews were tape recorded. Prior to completing the writing task and interview, students completed a brief questionnaire providing demographic information.

Method of Analyzing Students' Texts

As in Phase 1, the configuration of TOPICS and COMMENTS in each student's critique was mapped out to depict the flow of the total discourse. This type of mapping provided a means by which students' performance of critique could be analyzed. It allowed for analysis of the total number of TOPIC-COMMENT units, top-level configuration patterns, types of COMMENTS made, and types of SOURCE OF SUPPORT students included to support their views. Content units on the composite template of the source text had been tagged for the following thematic TOPICS:

DEFINITION

QR	QUASI-RELIGION
O-QR	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS
QR-D	QUASI-RELIGION-DEFINITION
R-D	RELIGION-DEFINITION
R-D-f	RELIGION-DEFINITION-FUNCTIONAL
R-D-s	RELIGION-DEFINITION-SUBSTANTIVE
R-D-f-v	RELIGION-DEFINITION-FUNCTIONAL-ADVANTAGE
R-D-f-g	RELIGION-DEFINITION-FUNCTIONAL-DISADVANTAGE
R-D-s-v	RELIGION-DEFINITION-SUBSTANTIVE-ADVANTAGE
QR-D-(1)	QUASI-RELIGION-DEFINITION (1)
R-D-s-g	RELIGION-DEFINITION-SUBSTANTIVE-DISADVANTAGE
R-D-am	RELIGION-DEFINITION-AMERICAN FOLK
K-D-am	RELIGIOUS-DEFINITION-AMERICAN FOLK
KO-D-am	NONRELIGIOUS-DEFINITION-AMERICAN FOLK
R-D-s-f-E	RELIGION-DEFINITION-SUBSTANTIVE-FUNCTIONAL-ERROR
R-D-t	RELIGION-DEFINITION-SUBJECTIVIST
R-D-b	RELIGION-DEFINITION-OBJECTIVIST
QR-D- (2)	QUASI-RELIGION-DEFINITION (2)

ILLUSTRATIONS

O-QR-sh-AA	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-SELF-HELP-ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

O-QR-sh-CP	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-SELF-HELP-COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
O-QR-p-est	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-HUMAN POTENTIAL MOVEMENT-est
O-QR-c-SSF	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-OCCULT TRADITION-SPIRITUAL FRONTIERS FELLOWSHIP
O-QR-na-X	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-NEW AGE-DIANETICS
O-QR-na-L	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-NEW AGE-SCIENTOLOGY
O-QR-na-TM	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-NEW AGE-TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION

COMMON CHARACTERISTICS

O-QR-F	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-FEATURES
O-QR-G	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-GOALS
O-QR-ITO'S	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-IDENTITY TRANSFORMATION ORGANIZATIONS

RELIGIOUS/NONRELIGIOUS LABEL

O-QR-IA	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-IDEOLOGICAL AMBIGUITY
O-QR-RL-v-N	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-RELIGIOUS LABEL-ADVANTAGE-FINANCIAL
O-QR-RL-v-CL	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-RELIGIOUS LABEL-ADVANTAGE-CIVIL AND LABOR
O-QR-RL-v-NN	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-RELIGIOUS LABEL-ADVANTAGE-NONFINANCIAL
O-QR-RL-v-M	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-RELIGIOUS LABEL-ADVANTAGE-LEGITIMACY
O-QR-RL-v-J	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-RELIGIOUS LABEL-ADVANTAGE-EXISTENTIAL
O-QR-NRL-g-P	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-NONRELIGIOUS LABEL-DISADVANTAGE-PRACTICAL
O-QR-NRL-v-M	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-NONRELIGIOUS LABEL-ADVANTAGE-LEGITIMACY
O-QR-NRL-v-NN	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-NONRELIGIOUS LABEL-ADVANTAGE-NONFINANCIAL
O-QR-NRL-v-B	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-NONRELIGIOUS LABEL-ADVANTAGE-BUSINESS
O-QR-NRL-v-J	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-NONRELIGIOUS LABEL-ADVANTAGE-EXISTENTIAL

SIGNIFICANCE

O-QR-S	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-SIGNIFICANCE

IMPLICATIONS

O-QR-I	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-IMPLICATIONS

Along with the thematic discourse TOPICS in the source text, two additional TOPICS were included in the template to represent students' COMMENTS about information that was not explicitly stated or found in the text. These, content units, too, were based on the thematic discourse TOPIC of a sentence. First, the TOPIC "SOURCE ARTICLE" was included for occasions when students focused on the source text as the TOPIC and made COMMENTS concerning some aspect of it. In such

instances, students might evaluate the clarity of the prose, or perhaps the authors' treatment of the issue, as in the following case: "Overall, On the Margins of the Sacred presents very interesting ideas, but does not back them up with facts or evidence."

A second TOPIC was included to represent TOPICS that students might introduce from outside the text into their critiques. For example, one student wrote in her essay: "The chaos in today's society (so-called modern problems such as drugs, child abuse, etc.) threaten people's sense of order and sense of a just world." Because this TOPIC is not discussed in the source text, it would be coded as IMPORT. In such cases, however, raters wrote in what they believed the focus was, so that in this case, the TOPIC would be Import-Chaos. These two topics were tagged:

EXTERNAL TO THE TEXT

SA	SOURCE ARTICLE
PT	IMPORT

Combined with the 216 from the source text these two additional tags made for a total of 218 content units from which students could construct their written critiques. At times, the content units in students' written critiques signaled more than one of these themes. More often, a theme or a subset of themes from one content unit was found embedded within other content units to construct unique thematic configurations.

The thematic tags for all content units were listed in vertical chains in the order in which the writer had presented them in the critique. Figure 1 shows a chain for a sample critique from Phase 1 (see Appendix B for the corresponding text). Once chains in a critique were listed the researcher looked for boundaries between thematic chunks. A boundary was identified when there was no overlapping thematic content for more than two content units.

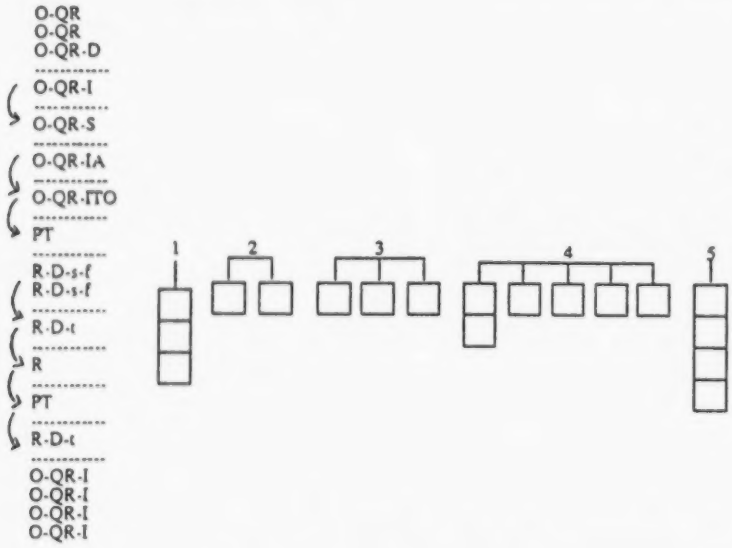

Figure 1. Sample chaining and chunking for student critique

Boundaries were examined case by case as the researcher read each critique to see if a student had constructed a link that was not from the source text. The following list of links, based on Spivey's (1983, 1984) method (cf. Anderson & Armbruster, 1985; D'Angelo, 1975; Grimes, 1975; Meyer, 1975; Schallert, Ulerick, & Tierney, 1985), seemed to cover the types of links used by the students in their critiques. An example from a student's critique is given for each link type.

1. Causal--Two chains are linked by supplying a cause-effect relationship between the content of the two.

> By doing this [categorizing], they are doing essentially the same thing they are being critical of other sociologists for doing.

2. Conditional--Two chains are linked because the elements of one are contingent upon elements in the other.

> Taking this line, I guess I'm questioning the whole idea of "quasi-religion" as being valid. . . . Maybe if Greil and Rudy write that longer paper someday, I could be persuaded to believe in their "quasi-religion" idea a little more.

3. Contrastive--Two chains are linked by pointing out some kind of contrast between the content of the two.

> Greil and Rudy, however, define quasi-religions as "entities whose status is anomalous given contemporary folk definitions of religion."

4. Evaluation--Two chains are linked because the elements of one are used to evaluate elements in the other.

> After critical examination of this article, I have found that the authors made some broad assumptions and did not back them up a lot of their statements with facts.

5. Exemplification--Two chains are linked because the elements in one are used to illustrate elements in the other.

> Some of the quasi-religions mentioned by the authors do not want to be typed as religious since some people might be scared off by the idea of a different religion. . . . Alcoholics Anonymous is one example cited.

6. Explanation--Two chains are linked because elements of one are used to explain elements of another, in either a more abstract or concrete fashion.

> [A discussion of different quasi-religious organizations and their treatment of a supreme being precedes this statement.]
> These superempirical concepts are deliberately vague and allow the follower to add their own interpretation, yet, still fit into the mold of Durkheim.

7. Similarity--Two chains are linked by pointing out some kind of similarity between the content of the two.

> On the one hand, some people are becoming more religious in the traditional sense, while on the other hand, others are finding religion within themselves. . . . I feel that this goes along with what the authors are saying because of how they spoke about these groups.

Text Variables Examined From Years One and Two

Several text variables were examined in each student's critique to compare their performance from year one and year two. These variables were selected because they have been found to be important indicators of text quality. These include: (1) Text configuration (Mathison, 1993; Spivey, 1984, 1991; Witte, 1983); (2) Length (Breland & Jones, 1984; Diederich, French, & Carlton, 1961; Freedman, 1979), and (3) Added material (Freedman & Pringle, 1980; Walvoord & McCarthy, 1990).

Text configuration. Various configuration patterns were suggested in the students' written critiques. To identify how they constructed the organizational frameworks for the task of critique, students' texts were analyzed for the discourse patterns that bound them together. Each student critique was read for its top-level configuration pattern, that is for its overall TOPIC-COMMENT configurations the students seemed to construct in the written critiques. This measure was derived by judging the overall pattern of TOPICS and COMMENTS (negative, positive, or suspended judgment) in the flow of thematic chains and chunks in a student's critique. For example, some students may have begun their critiques with suspended commentary before moving on to provide negative or positive commentary about particular TOPICS, while others may have interspersed suspended commentary with negative or positive commentary. The distribution of evaluative commentary throughout the thematic chains and chunks suggested particular configurations of critique.

The above method identifies one top-level configuration that logically embodies the largest pattern of TOPICS and their COMMENTS in a text. In other words, it may be that while various patterns of TOPIC-COMMENT configurations are present in the text, they may be subsumed under a larger pattern that signals an overall configuration. Larger patterns were easily identified by examining the links made between thematic chains since these links often signaled relations among discourse topics. Figure 1, which illustrates the chaining and chunking procedure, illustrates how TOPICS and COMMENTS were configured in this student's critique.

There were two different text configurations. These two, *Topic-Comment Separate Configuration* and *Topic-Comment Integrated Configuration*, are illustrated in Figures 2 and 3, respectively. Following is a description of the two Configurations:

Topic -comment separate configuration: When signaling the topic-comment separate configuration the writer organizes the critique at the top-level according to two separate collections, a Topic Collection and a Comment Collection. In the Topic Collection the writer first presents a collection of TOPICS, providing suspended commentary on them. In the Comment Collection the writer moves on to include a collection of TOPICS, providing evaluative commentary on them, either negative or positive. This configuration of TOPICS and COMMENTS suggests a critique in which the writer supplies a summary of the article before providing an evaluation of it or particular aspects of it. Thus, the writer includes a collection of TOPICS before finally providing a collection of COMMENTARY in latter thematic chains and chunks. Two variations of this configuration were identified. Both are similar in that they suggest a

collection of TOPICS before a collection of COMMENTS. However, some writers chose to first provide an encapsulated overview of the article, which was then further elaborated in the collection of TOPICS, while others did not. Writers who did not include any type of encapsulated overview of the article launched right into a collection of TOPICS.

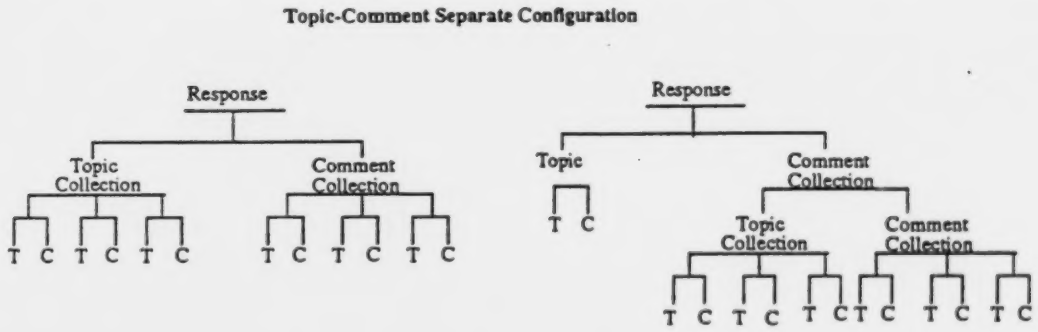

Figure 2. Topic-Comment separate text configurations

Topic-comment integrated configuration: When using the topic-comment integrated configuration the writer organizes the critique at the top level interweaving TOPICS and evaluative COMMENTS throughout the text. Two configurations signal this discourse pattern. In the first configuration the writer produces a series of response patterns in which a TOPIC is selected and a positive or negative COMMENT is made about it. This pattern of TOPIC-COMMENT continues throughout the critique. In the second configuration the writer first introduces a TOPIC or a series of TOPICS and then moves on to include a COMMENT collection. The COMMENT collection is comprised of a series of TOPICS (related to the initial TOPIC/S) and their evaluative COMMENTS, positive or negative. Thus, TOPIC and COMMENT pairings are integrated throughout the text.

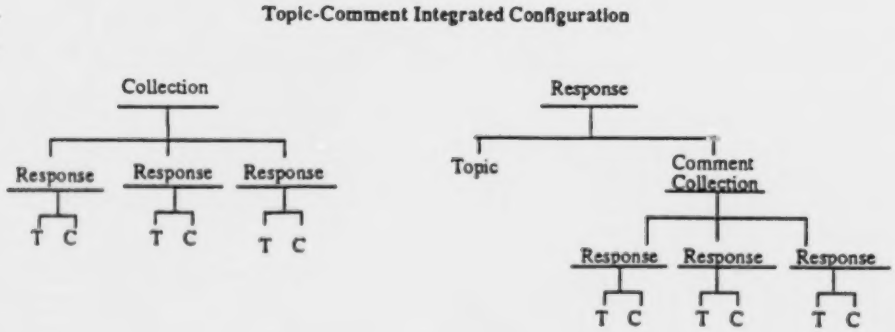

Figure 3. Topic-Comment integrated text configurations

Length. Another measure derived from text analysis was length. The number of content units (sentences) in each student's critique was counted to provide a score for length. The more content units, the longer the critique.

Added material: Commentary. Another text measure was the degree to which students' critiques provided evaluative commentary. As described earlier, each content unit included in a text was coded for the type of evaluative COMMENT a student made about a TOPIC. Each COMMENT was coded as either Positive Commentary, Negative Commentary, or Suspended Commentary. An example from a student's essay is given for each type.

1. Positive commentary-- A COMMENT was considered positive (+) if it demonstrated agreement, like, or support of a TOPIC. A COMMENT that did not explicitly state agreement, like, or support of a TOPIC but was embedded within a chain that did demonstrate positive judgment was also coded as a positive judgment if it contributed to the overall critical dimension.

> First of all, the authors make a very good critical statement about the substantives and functionalists in sociology.

2. Negative commentary-- A COMMENT was considered negative (-) if it demonstrated disagreement, dislike, or lack of support of a TOPIC. A COMMENT that did not explicitly state disagreement, dislike, or lack of support of a TOPIC but was embedded within a chain that did demonstrate negative judgment, was also coded as a negative judgment, if it contributed to the overall critical dimension.

> If the authors would have taken more time with clearer definitions, more in-depth study with statements that could have been considered fact, this article would have been much stronger and more credible.

3. Suspended commentary-- A COMMENT was considered suspended judgment (0) if it did not demonstrate any evaluative function of a TOPIC. A suspended COMMENT was generally a reporting of information.

> "Quasi-religions are organizations which either see themselves or are seen by others as 'sort-of' religious" (p. 221).

To obtain the score for commentary the total count for the three types of evaluative COMMENT was calculated. Then, the researcher divided the total number of Negative Commentary by the total number of TOPICS to obtain the proportion of Negative Commentary, the NEGATIVE COMMENTARY SCORE, for each critique. The higher the proportion, the higher the score, and thus the more negative the critique.

Added material: Source of support. Text analyses also included a measure for the origin of a support for a COMMENT. The degree to which students' evaluations of the source article were Personal Commentary to the material or Disciplinary-based Commentary was calculated by looking at how they supported their COMMENTS on TOPICS. This measure examined the source of students' support for their comments by coding each COMMENT as either Disciplinary-based or Personal SOURCE OF SUPPORT. An example from a student's essay is given for each type.

1. Disciplinary-based--A COMMENT was coded as Disciplinary (D) in nature if it made use of material from the source text, class discussions, related readings, other related courses, or background knowledge in sociology.

> Most likely [the American Folk definition of religion is losing its hold], because while people still have the same needs that caused them to turn to religion in the first place--need to have answers to the unanswerable, sense of order in the world, sense of community, help in dealing with human dilemmas--many of these needs have grown due to changes in society.

2. Personal-- A COMMENT was coded as Personal (P) if it made use of material related to a student's personal experience, background, or opinion. In this case, COMMENTS included references to a student's life or beliefs.

> A very close friend of my father's is an alcoholic.

Each of the two types of source of support was totaled. Then, the number of Disciplinary-based COMMENTS was divided by the total number of COMMENTS. This measured the proportion of Disciplinary-based COMMENTS to the total number of COMMENTS to provide a score for SOURCE OF SUPPORT. The higher the proportion, the more students were using disciplinary knowledge to convince their readers.

Results and Discussion

One of the six students constructed a text that was similar to that which he constructed last year and five students constructed texts that were different. The student whose text was similar suggests that he took the same stance toward the source article in both years. This student organized his second critique using the same configuration as that of the first critique and included considerably more overlapping TOPICS than the other students in his critiques. He also included similar proportions of added material in both critiques.

Students whose critiques this year differed from those of last year varied their stance. Whereas last year their texts may have been more negative, positive, or suspended judgment, this year they altered their position. Two students in this group organized their critiques differently, while three constructed top-level organizational patterns that were the same. All five students evidenced a shifting of the proportions of added material in their critiques. Students' selection of TOPICS from the source article also differed. Thus, different textual patterns from one year to the next are more pronounced in this group's texts than in the student's texts that were more similar in both years.

There were no patterns in the length of a text. Length did not alter according to whether texts were similar or different but was more an indication of individual performance. Below is a description of each student's performance from year one to year two. Excerpts from the interview with students render insight into their perceptions of why these changes did or did not occur.

A Student Whose Texts Were Similar: Ted

Ted

> *[Critique] should play a big role in any discipline because...it hopefully will stimulate some discussion on the topic. . . Um... because it's the only way any sort of um, understanding of social interaction can come about, I think. is by different definitions, different things being put out there and discussed, talked about, criticized...just in general to have critique because it gives you a dialogue. ... Where do you end up? I mean, really you don't end up anywhere. It just keeps on going.*

Ted's metaphor of critique being a dialogue is reminiscent of Burke's (1941) discussion of the unending conversation, which describes the interaction of people and ideas over time. Burke places the reader--you--in a scene. You enter a room. A conversation is already under way. You listen for a while to see what the conversation is about and then decide when to join in. As you participate, some people come to your defense, agreeing with you, while others argue with you, disagreeing. This type of rhetorical interaction continues indefinitely. When you leave the room, the conversation is still in progress. "It just keeps going," as Ted says in the quote above. And yet, according to Ted, some new understanding can come about as a result of this interaction. His own critiques demonstrate an ability to disagree with the authors and to point out weaknesses in their argument. By doing so, Ted poses a new way for his reader to think about the topic--and to potentially arrive at a new understanding.

Ted's stance is the same in year one and year two. Although he thinks the authors have raised some important issues concerning contemporary society, he believes that their approach to the topic is short-sighted and narrow. At the heart of Ted's critiques is his belief that to critique is to "not take something at face value. You have to look at the argument, you look at the strengths and the weaknesses of the argument. You kind of look beyond this to try to see, you know, the subtext or the context which is written. You look to see who's writing it. You have to look to see who their intended audience is. You look to see or assume, 'cause you have to assume why they're writing it." In both years the majority of Ted's critique is centered on dismantling the authors' line of reasoning by demonstrating a flaw in their definition of quasi-religion. This continuity in Ted's conception of critique can be seen in the intertextual links between the TOPICS included in his texts for both years.

TOPICS. Similarities and differences in Ted's selection of TOPICS can be seen by comparing the TOPICS included in his texts in year one and year two of the study. Intertextual links, that is, material included in both texts, is denoted by the bold face print. Arrows mark where the links occur in the two texts. Sometimes these links are made through the same TOPIC. Other times, the links are made through a different combination of TOPICS, a type of paraphrase of the same material. Figure 4 shows the TOPICS Ted selected to include in his critiques and the intertext he developed.

In both critiques Ted focuses the majority of his TOPICS on two issues. The first is his belief that the authors were ethnocentric in their definition of quasi-religion, basing it on a Western conception of religion. This, Ted writes in 1992, "is a

culturally specific, ethnocentric view of religion. Many of what the authors call quasi-religions are derived from the religious beliefs and practices of other cultures."

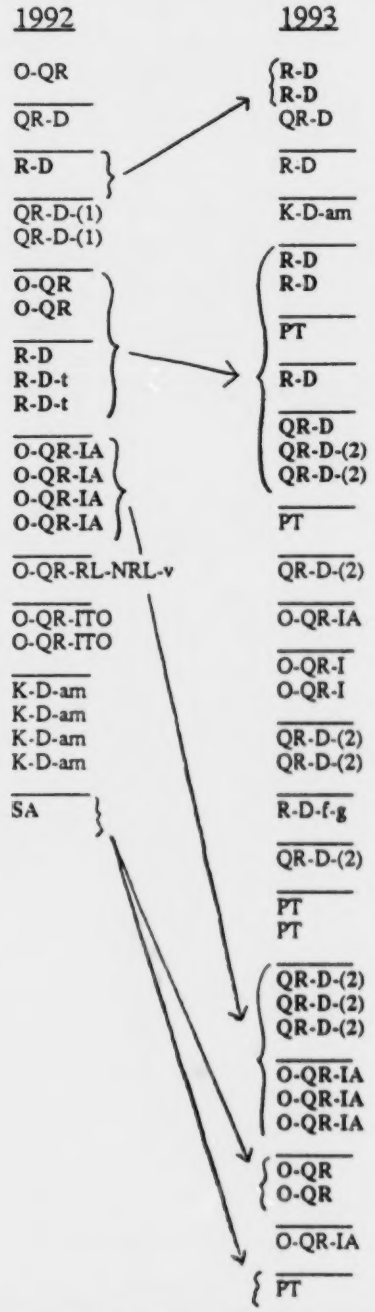

Figure 4. Ted's selection of TOPICS and their intertext

A year later he explains: "The definition of religion given by Greil and Rudy is a

very ethnocentric one, one that best describes things that resemble traditional Western style religions." In both years, .27 of his text addresses this weakness.

A second, but related issue Ted finds problematic is the premise that quasi-religious organizations are ideologically ambiguous. Again, Ted points out that something that might be religious to one person may not be to another. In his first critique, Ted, using an example from his own life, examines how a sacred organization can have secular aspects just as much as a secular organization can have sacred aspects. This concern is present in his 1993 critique, although stated differently. "The problem with this [ideological ambiguity] is that many different people may see the same thing from a very different perspective and have a very different definition of the same phenomena." Eighteen percent of Ted's critiques deal with this particular problem.

Ted also ends both critiques similarly. In the first year, he concludes by saying that "Despite these shortcomings, the article does raise some interesting questions about religions and things that lie on the borders of what so many people call religions." The second year he states "I am not trying to say that the authors' discussion of the quasi-religious has no validity or importance. On the contrary, I am quite interested by institutions that seem to have some religious characteristics, and looking at how these characteristics affect what they do in society." He then suggests an alternative approach to the study of organizations that fall between the sacred and the secular.

There are also some differences in Ted's two critiques. While his first critique solely deals with the issues above, other problems are focused upon in the critique he wrote in 1993. Specifically, Ted uses the authors' material from the source article to demonstrate contradictions in their own reasoning, weakening particular points in their argument. For example, he accuses them of being too broad in their definition of quasi-religion, a weakness the authors themselves found with a Functionalist definition of religion.

Added material. Ted's critiques remain consistent in his treatment of the TOPICS he includes and his support for them. As seen in Table 3, the majority of Ted's commentary for both years is negative (.82). These comments are illustrated above in the types of comments he made about the TOPICS he included in his critique. Ted also includes some suspended judgment as he introduces TOPICS for discussion. This suspended judgment is then followed by negative or positive commentary as he discusses strengths and weaknesses. Finally, what little positive commentary he includes is in his conclusion where he credits the authors (despite the apparent weaknesses in their article) for taking up an important social topic.

Both years Ted also supports his commentary with disciplinary support. Ninety one percent of his support in both years is taken from the source article or other class material. For example, he demonstrates how the authors contradict themselves, using the source article as the basis for his critique. Or, he refers to information that was discussed earlier in the course. When he does use personal experience or opinions to back his commentary, he does so after he has fortified his position with disciplinary support. His personal opinion, then, comes across as based upon disciplinary support.

Configuration. Ted's organization of TOPICS and COMMENTS suggests a TOPIC-COMMENT Integrated Configuration for both critiques. His texts follow a pattern of introducing a TOPIC and then providing evaluative commentary on it. This

pattern continues throughout his critiques, creating a type of argument, each TOPIC and its COMMENT building upon the previous.

Length. The critique Ted constructed in 1993 is longer than the text he constructed in 1992. In his first critique, Ted's text has 22 content units, whereas his second text has 33. This difference in length can be attributed to the development of TOPICS he includes in his text rather than to an introduction of new TOPICS. In other words, Ted elaborates more on the TOPICS he includes in his second critique. This can be seen in Figure 4, where he has selected and linked more TOPICS in 1993 than in 1992.

Perceptions of change. Although Ted's critiques for both years are similar, he believes that the critique he constructed his second year is better. "I tend to be a lot more skeptical and a little more confident in my skepticism, " he explains. "I've taken a lot more classes, I've read more, and I've had a lot more practice doing it, so I know how to handle it better. I know how to read a text more critically." Reading more critically for Ted means looking for assumptions and the purpose of an argument. Sometimes this means that "[y]ou may have to put yourself in a different position since you're reading it, you know...um...put yourself in the position of intended audience, put yourself in the position of maybe the opposition."

Once he has defined the major premise and its assumptions, Ted takes the authors' argument and points out its flaws. "As I said before," Ted says," I was very specific about the definition I was critiquing and why I critiqued it. . . . that is the basis of their entire article. And you know, attacking that basic premise and being able to take that apart, you know, renders their whole article very vulnerable to attack." As he discusses the particular strategies he used when in constructing his own critique, Ted envisions himself a participant in the conversation concerning quasi-religions. The level of participation, however, depends on his knowledge of the topic. "I'm not always all that confident. I mean, I'm a lot moreso than I was. . . . When I understand the argument that I'm criticizing or I really understand the language that they're using...If they're talking in language that I may not understand then it's kind of hard to feel confident about critiquing. . . . If I didn't really understand it, then I'm very vulnerable." At times, then, Ted may hold back, may even leave the room, using Burke's (1941) metaphor, before he has a chance to speak. But when he does share his critique with others, he is likely to further the conversation. An important feature of Ted's new conception of critique (which is seen in his second text) is the ability to offer alternatives to flawed ideas. In that way, "somebody else could expand on that and say, 'OK, this or that is good' and we can talk about that."

Students Whose Texts Were Different: Amy, Enya, Hannah, Sally, and Theresa

Amy

> *[Critique plays] a large role because sociology is a study of society but it's also brought about by certain people. You know, sociology was really developed by a few people, I think. . . like Marx and Weber, who really brought about the idea that sociology can be studied. And uh, that depends on what in sociology, um you know, in sociology you can be studying so I think that critique is important because you might not have that much knowledge of what the sociologist is studying necessarily. Like when I was in*

> *Intro to Soc. we had a, to study a certain group of people. We didn't know anything about them. So, a critique is important because you need, you know, you read one article about this group of people and then you have to go study them. . . I think it would give you um, knowledge and viewpoints that you wouldn't have had before.*

The quote above from Amy's interview suggests that the task of critique serves as a learning device. "Critique," she explains, "it's asking you to bring your own judgments into a new set of knowledge, you know. And so, critique I can bring it, you know I'm reading something I totally don't know before but I'm allowed to say, 'Well, I know this from something else' and put it together. . . . I think it makes the students question what they're reading. Most people just read it and don't really bring their own personality into it and their questions." Amy also believes that critique can play the same role for professors but that because their "level of expertise is different, it's gonna bring about a different level of knowledge." Unlike students, however, she believes that critique can "create dialogue" among experts--"between the author and the reader and then the reader again. You continue to critique each other. Like if A read an article about B and then somebody read an article about A's view of B, then there's a dialogue going on." Amy's two texts encapsulate her views of critique for students and professors. In her first critique, she wants to create a dialogue between herself and the professor. She accomplishes this but at the expense of her own exploration of the topic. In the second critique, when there is no instructor as audience, no possibility for dialogue, Amy explores the article to facilitate her own learning.

These transformations in Amy's critiques render them two very different texts. She moves from taking a stance in 1992, claiming that quasi-religions are religions based on Durkheim's definition, to exploring the topic in a different manner in 1993. Specifically, her exploration consists of asking *why* the boundaries between the sacred and the secular are blurring. Her texts shift from challenging the validity of the concept to examining social practices and beliefs regarding religion. These shifts can be seen in the TOPICS she selects, her commentary, and the configuration that her critiques suggest.

TOPICS. Similarities and differences in Amy's selection of TOPICS can be seen by comparing the TOPICS included in her texts in year one and year two of the study. Intertextual links, that is, material included in both texts, is denoted by the bold face print. Arrows mark where the links occur in the two texts. Sometimes these links are made through the same TOPIC. Other times, the links are made through a different combination of TOPICS, a type of paraphrase of the same material. Figure 5 shows the TOPICS Amy selected to include in her critiques and the intertext she developed.

Added material. Unlike Ted, whose stance and critique are consistent, Amy changes her position and constructs a different text. In her first critique, Amy, like Ted grappled with the concept of quasi-religion. Ted challenged its assumptions by critiquing the authors' definition. Amy challenged its status, invoking Durkheim's definition of religion to demonstrate how a quasi-religion actually was sacred, and not secular. She asserts "using Durkheim's definition [of religion], the parallels between quasi-religion and religion become obvious; many of the ideologies of these quasi-religions fit into the sacred rather than the secular." Much of the remainder of her text illustrates these parallels. "These quasi-religions," she explains, "assert their differences from religions in many ways, which in some closer analysis may bring out

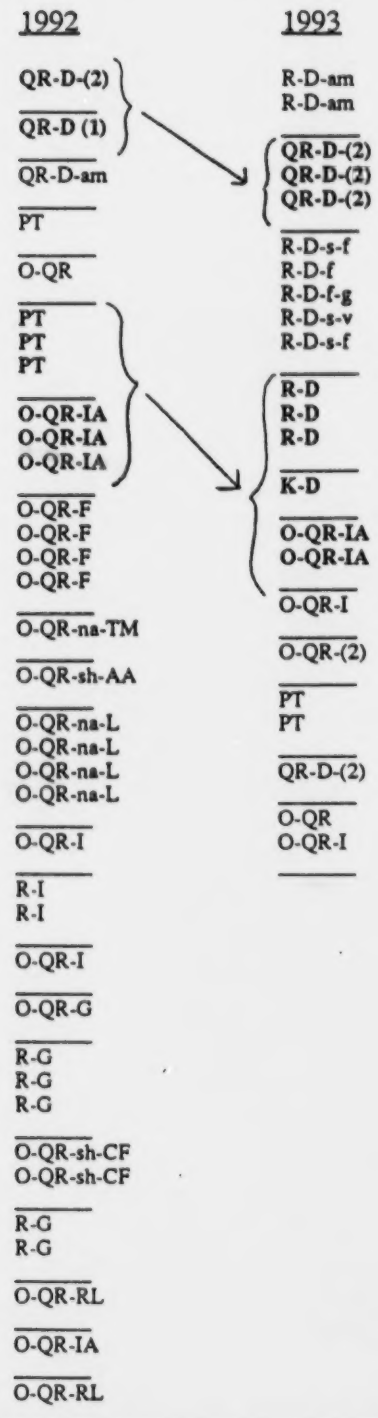

Figure 5. Amy's selection of TOPICS and their intertext

their similarities. A prime example, common to all the examples in the article, is the semantic change from congregation or church, to meeting or class." Regardless of the

name, the ritual of both pertains to the sacred. After demonstrating case after case how these groups parallel religious organizations, Amy concludes strongly: "According to this analysis, quasi-religions fit primarily in the sacred over the profane." These remarks constitute negative commentary, disagreement with the authors' claim that these organizations can be seen as sacred *and* secular. The first year, .67 of Amy's critique included negative commentary. This changed dramatically the following year when only .13 of her critique included negative commentary.

Amy's second critique, using her own words was more of a "response paper." In her first critique she challenges the concept. In the second critique, she provides her personal response to the idea of a quasi-religion. For example, she says "I think the concept of quasi-religions are very interesting and show the divisions and confusions involved in defining religion." This second critique is more supportive of the article. As Table 3 shows, only .13 of her commentary is negative. The larger proportion is suspended judgment (.74), which includes a synopsis of the article. Other suspended judgments include elaborations of why Amy is interested in quasi-religions, why they are important. She says "The definition of religions as we have understood it is changing, along with our ability to place things into a black and white guideline." The little negative commentary she includes in her second critique has to do with particular categories of religion that she would have liked to have seen discussed. "Civil religion," she explains," is an interesting example not brought into the paper." But despite this weakness, Amy concludes that she believes that the "appearance of quasi-religions is true."

The type of source of support that Amy includes in her two texts changes qualitatively, not proportionally. Both years she uses proportionally more disciplinary support (.97 in year 1 and .96 in year two). In year one, the disciplinary support comes from the source article and from classroom discussion. She uses this support to illustrate the parallels between quasi-religions and religions, so that by the time she concludes her text with " I believe that these groups are religions," she has based this claim on prior disciplinary texts. In year two this changes. Much of the disciplinary source of support is used as summary of the source article and to show why quasi-religions exist.

Configuration. The configuration of TOPICS and COMMENTS in Amy's two critiques differed. The organization of her first critique suggested a TOPIC-COMMENT Integrated Configuration, while the second text suggested a TOPIC-COMMENT Separate Configuration. Like Ted, Amy's first critique follows a pattern of introducing a TOPIC and then providing evaluative commentary on it. This pattern continues throughout her critique, creating a type of argument, each TOPIC and its COMMENT building upon the previous. In the second critique, however, she constructs a critique that included a collection of TOPICS with suspended commentary before moving on to provide a collection of TOPICS with evaluative commentary. Thus, her second critique signals a summarization of the source article followed by an evaluation of particular points. In this case, only one--the exclusion of civil religion.

Length. Amy's second critique is shorter than her first. Her first text included 36 TOPIC-COMMENT units. Her second included 23 units. One of the reasons for the difference in length is the lack of development of ideas. She brings up TOPICS for commentary but then doesn't elaborate. For example, Amy writes "while I may have placed some of the examples of the paper into sacred and secular..." However, no examples are included, an oversight Amy herself notices in her critique. "I don't tell what examples," she said. Later, Amy explained that "I sort of lost concentration and

sort of summarized in my view what the person was saying without really substantiating it whatsoever. Saying that I believe this, but didn't tell why." Her first critique, however, elaborates her position.

Perceptions of change. One of the reasons Amy may have performed so differently in writing her critiques is the influence of the classroom teacher. " I was very intent in class on pleasing Professor X and really sticking with the article. And really saying 'This is the article, this is what it means, this is what it's done.'" In this situation Amy wants to please the teacher. Moreover, she knows the type of text moves she needs to make to accomplish that. "It's more of a position paper," she says of her first text. What is interesting, is that Amy acknowledges that the text moves are more important than her actual beliefs about the source article. In an interview, Amy revealed that she thought she had to take a stand. Because the article was difficult for her to understand, she opted to take a position and work from there. And so, Amy did not construct a critique that suggests the complexity she feels about the topic.

She does feel, though, that her second critique accomplishes this moreso than her first. "But this [second critique]," she explains, "I really sort of drew in my personal knowledge and helped me get my reaction. I would probably say this is more of a reaction paper than a critique. I'm not in the class right now so there, there's no grade resting on it and I can, you know, really work with it as a personal thing and not work with it as a class thing." She explained in the interview that, although she does not like the idea of quasi-religions, she thinks they do exist and need to be addressed. These comments point to an interesting dilemma Amy experiences as she writes. On the one hand, she wants to engage in some type of dialogue with her teacher. In order to do this she feels she must short circuit her own learning process to perform adequately. On the other hand, when Amy does explore the topic more to her own needs, she does not have the knowledge to construct a critique that effectively deals with the complexity of the issue.

Enya

> *I suppose that in that case [critiquing the work of sociologists] it would be important to see like what I originally did with Greil and Rudy's article, which was maybe how you would critique any article in any discipline, was just, you know, was the points well-supported, you know, did they give ample examples of what they um, of what they were trying to get at. So I guess critiquing in that way is important--the argument. Or I guess it's a lot of research, if the research is , is presented, if it's supportive or not. . . If somebody say, read this, another sociologist and did the same research or like researched all these groups and found something different like, I think that if they critiqued it, said so and so, you know, this could not be considered for reason, you know, because it's not factual. I mean they proved it well, but you could argue that it's that these groups in their article are not what they're, you know.*

Enya holds a dual conception of critique. Rather than seeing critique as having dual roles as some of the students do (i.e., to learn vs. to dialogue), Enya sees critique as having two different approaches. Her first approach is that of a generalist. In this sense, critique is text-bound. Do the authors write successfully? Do their

conclusions derive from their premises? She thinks that anyone reading a text can participate at this level because critique is argument analysis. According to Enya, when critics evaluate a text they can comment on if "it it's coherent or if it makes sense." Enya's second conception of critique is discipline-bound. Critique here results from analysis of the content. Is the data reliable? Is the conclusion true? Enya thinks that critique can go beyond argument analysis to testing claims through research. In conducting research, sociologists may find that the original claim is subject to rival hypotheses.

Enya considers herself more of the generalist when she critiques. She is not a sociology major and has little confidence in her ability to critique ideas. "It's pretty hard to critique, like for me, how good a sociological study this is. . . .If you don't have, but I can read it and think about what it says, think about if it makes sense, but I can't really get too far into like its sociological...," she drifts off. Although she is not confident in her ability to comment on sociological material, Enya makes use of sociological concepts to organize both critiques. Both years she uses the same concept --social constructionism-- around which to build her critique. In the first year, however, her critique is not developed as fully as it is in her second critique. This may in part be due to new knowledge that she can incorporate into her text the second year. This new knowledge also influences her evaluation of the text. In year one Enya supports the idea of a quasi-religion. In year two, she admonishes the authors for jumping to conclusions when other hypotheses could explain the same phenomena.

TOPICS. Similarities and differences in Enya's selection of TOPICS can be seen by comparing the TOPICS included in her texts in year one and year two of the study.

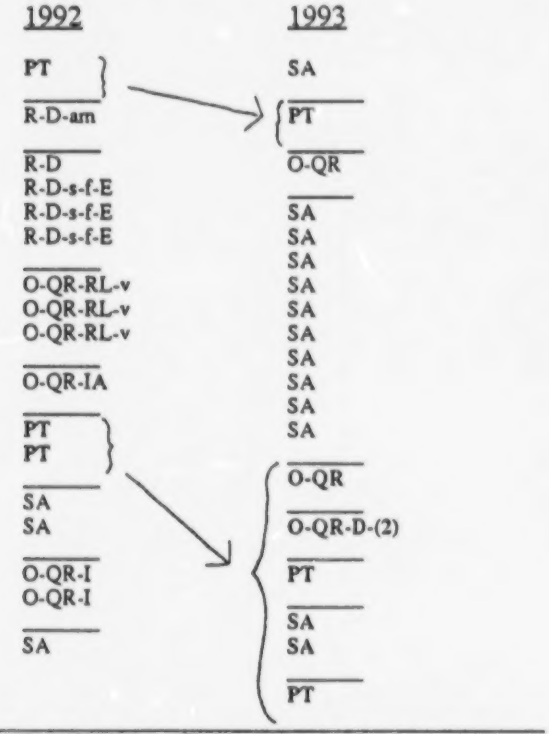

Figure 6. Enya's selection of TOPICS and their intertext

Intertextual links, that is, material included in both texts, is denoted by the bold face print. Arrows mark where these links occur in the two texts. Sometimes these links are made through the same TOPIC. Other times, the links are made through a different combination of TOPICS, a type of paraphrase or elaboration of the same material. Figure 6 shows the TOPICS Enya selected to include in her critiques and the intertext she developed.

The text that Enya constructs in 1992 does not fit neatly into either of her two categories of critique. It's not really an analysis of the authors' argument. Her evaluation seems to be more in line with her second conception of critique in which the content of the article is evaluated. And it is not through conducting her own research that she supports her commentary but through the use of sociological concepts that she has learned about in the course. In 1992 Enya is very supportive of quasi-religions, drawing upon a basic tenet of sociology: religion is a social construction. Therefore, reasons Enya, if someone sees something as either secular or sacred, that's ok--people have the right to believe what they want to believe. No one, she seems to think, has the right to say that one system of religious belief is better than another. "Are the people who say that Alcoholics Anonymous is not a religion the same people who say Catholicism is?" she asks. Enya continues her critique mentioning how she is skeptical of new religious movements: "Having once done a research paper on 'televangelism,' I was already skeptical of many new religious movements prior to reading this article." Enya agrees with the authors' claims that these quasi-religions deliberately remain ambiguous about their religious or non religious affiliation. But, she says that "this ambiguity can be applied to individuals as well as to organizations." Finally, she concludes by saying that she thinks it is better to study and analyze religion before "blindly accepting it."

Enya's second text is more similar to the features of critique she mentioned in the interview. It is a combination of argument analysis and concept evaluation. In 1993, Enya begins her critique as she did in 1992--with the idea that religion is a social construction. The similarity ends there, however. Rather than using social constructionism as a means to support a new definition of religion, Enya uses it to demonstrate how the authors have overlooked that people, not organizations determine religious status. In short, Enya believes the authors "failed to show that the people who attend these meetings of these "sort-of" religions are actually only "sort-of" marginally religious." This comment was alluded to in her first critique where she states that the ambiguity can be applied to people as well as institutions. Her negative commentary in the second critique elaborates this point, as illustrated in the last third of her text in Figure 6. At the same time that Enya evaluates the ideas presented in the article, she also is analyzing the credibility of the authors' argument. She explains that regardless of whether a reader agrees or not, the article is well-written and clear. Examples of what makes an argument credible include defining the topic under discussion and providing examples that fit this description.

Added material. One of the most startling differences between her two critiques is Enya's change of stance. In her first critique, she supports this new concept. As seen in Table 3, .59 of her critique demonstrates agreement with the authors. There is very little negative commentary (.06). The rest is suspended judgment, where she summarizes the main points of the article. Enya's second critique is more balanced. Table 3 shows this shift. Although the largest proportion of text is positive (.42), negative commentary is next with .37 of the text addressing some aspect of disagreement or lack of support. These proportions mirror Enya's description of features: argument analysis and concept evaluation. The argument is

sound. "Whether one agrees with Greil and Rudy or not, it seems to me, fair to say that they did their job of presenting an argument and supporting it," she says. And then she supports her argument. Her negative commentary, then, deals with the actual concept of quasi-religion, with which she has some problems.

The source of support for her commentary does not change much, as shown in Table 3. Both years, Enya relies on disciplinary source of support over the personal. In year one, .71 of her commentary is based on disciplinary support. In year two, this increases slightly to .74. When Enya does use personal source of support, her use is similar to Ted's. She first creates an argument based on disciplinary support before providing her personal support. It is not uncommon in her texts to see a string of commentary based on disciplinary support followed by a comment based on personal support. After laying out a disciplinary line of reasoning, Enya tells the reader where she stands on the issue.

Configuration. The manner in which Enya configured the TOPICS she selected and the COMMENTS she made about them is consistent from year one to year two. The pattern suggests a TOPIC-COMMENT Integrated Configuration for both critiques. Her texts follow a pattern of introducing a TOPIC and then providing evaluative commentary on it. This pattern continues in both her critiques. In the first critique, Enya selects diverse TOPICS for commentary. The effect is a collection of COMMENTS on unrelated TOPICS. In her second critique, Enya's evaluation is focused on fewer related TOPICS, creating a type of argument, each TOPIC and its COMMENT building upon the previous.

Length. There is litle change in length between the two critiques. There are 17 content units in the first text and 19 in the second.

Perceptions of change. Enya attributes the changes in her critiques to her interpretation of the source article. "When I read it this time, I can tell I was reading it differently last time. Cuz here [in the first critique] it's more supporting the point that they were making that all these groups can be accurately labeled religious and here, just now [her second critique], I'm more skeptical," she says. In fact, she explains that she was "more annoyed that they were just trying to like, you know, define this that specifically and then list all these examples." She attributes her new skepticism to a class she took the year following the writing of the first critique. This class, *Religion and Rationality*, may have had an impact because "in short," she says, "that class talked about how you can define religion." Before Enya was willing to believe the authors because the argument seemed plausible. They did a good job of defining quasi-religion and demonstrating how these organizations that they were studying fit into that new category. But in the second year, Enya had studied the subject more in depth and applied this new information to the source article. There is a shift in her treatment of the text that demonstrates a new knowledge of the complexity of interpreting texts. While she acknowledges that the source article makes sense (which was one of her criterion for critique), she moves to a different level of evaluation and challenges its premises using content from another course to expand her own thinking. Thus, changes in her critiques are due to transferring information learned in one context to another.

Hannah

> *I think critique is important because it allows sociologists to argue and I think arguing is ... that's a way to get to*

know something about a subject... If you argue then you're gonna get different perspectives and interpretations on the same subject. It furthers the information on the subject because if someone's gonna argue with you, you're gonna go research it more and more and get more data and that kinda thing... As a student, I really don't see my critiques going very far. As a student, I mean, it might you know, a professor might say "Wow, that, that's an interesting idea. Let me go research that a little." . . . But on the whole, I think it's more for me. I mean, I'm at an age where I'm taking classes for me and um, whether my critiques cause a professor to get a Nobel Prize or not, hey, great, but um, I want credit. I mean the undergraduate level is, it's not, I mean, it's a good time period. It's a good, I don't know how to say it. It's not a bad thing, it's not a put down at all, but it only, your work only goes so far because you only know so much. You only know how to do so much.

Hannah has defined herself as a student of sociology rather than a participant in its discourse community. As a student, she sees her own work not as a contribution to the discipline, but as a way to further her own understanding of the world. Her focus on writing the critique is more on relating information in the text to her developing conception of, and position in the world. Her goal, then, is not to further the conversation on a disciplinary issue, but to further her own thinking about the world. Her conception of critique, as she has described it, is suggested in her written texts in both years, although her position on quasi-religions changes from year one to year two.

According to Hannah, her text, at least for this particular task, is based upon "constructive criticism," which she describes as "taking one small thing out of an article and pull it out. So to me critique means reading something and finding and integrating points and working with those points." She understands that critique involves aligning one's self with a text; she believes that she must agree or disagree with the authors. Having an opinion, then, is important. "I disagree with the fact that they [the authors] didn't talk about why people are moving away from religions," she explained. "So I disagreed with that and used my opinion to answer the question for myself." Hannah takes an issue--why people are turning to quasi-religions--and expands upon it, exploring the potential reasons for the rise of these organizations. She also moves from this core issue to explore other issues that are salient to her interests at the time she constructed her critiques. These similarities and differences can be seen in her selection of TOPICS, as well as in her evaluative treatment of them.

TOPICS. Similarities and differences in Hannah's selection of TOPICS can be seen by comparing the TOPICS included in her texts in year one and year two of the study. Intertextual links, that is, material included in both texts, is denoted by the bold face print. Arrows mark where the links occur in the two texts. Sometimes these links are made through the same TOPIC. Other times, the links are made through a different combination of TOPICS, a type of paraphrase of the same material. Figure 7 shows the TOPICS Hannah selected to include in her critiques and the intertext she developed.

In 1992 she states in her text, "At the end of the article, the authors present the significance of quasi-religions. They seem to feel that Americans must be unsatisfied with the options given them by full-blown religions." Following this claim, she

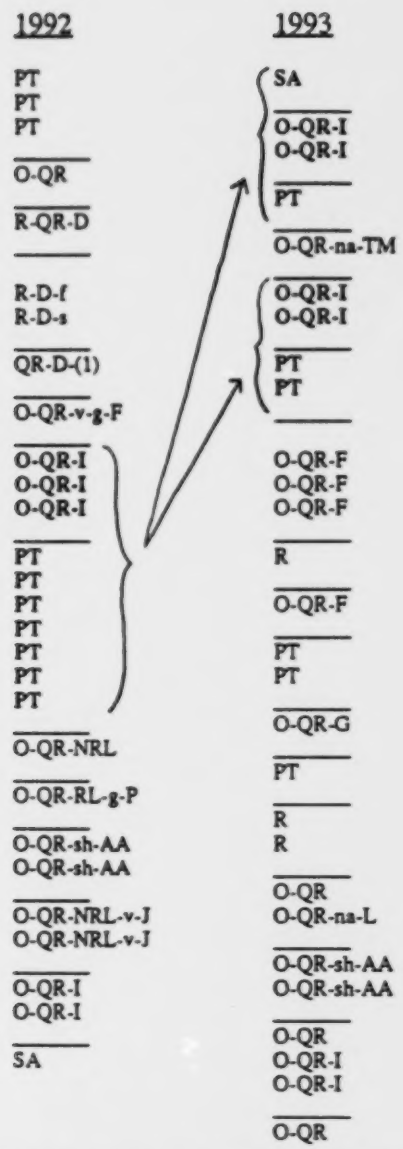

Figure 7. Hannah's selection of TOPICS and their intertext

explains why Americans might be dissatisfied. This same stance toward the text is threaded throughout her second critique. In 1993, for example, she begins her text with the sentence: "On the Margins of the Sacred is an article I find packed with questions, but 'for reasons of space limitations' does not offer too many reasons as to why "quasi-religions" exist and why people are turning away from religions." She then proceeds to provide her own answers her to this question. In 1992, .36 of her critique focuses on supplying a response to this question. This shifts in 1993 to account for .29 of her text. These intertextual links can be seen at different points in both her critiques as she includes the same TOPICS in both texts.

Although both her critiques are similar in that a moderate proportion of them focus on the same perceived weakness, the locus of the her disagreement with the source article changes from one year to the next. In the first critique, Hannah uses her response to show why quasi-religions came about and then questions whether they can be considered religions. She states that some of these quasi-religions may not be seen as religious at all, and in fact, members of a quasi-religion may maintain their own religious affiliations while belonging to quasi-religious organizations. She wonders if "a person can belong to AA and still be a Christian or Jew." Therefore, it is not a question of quasi-religious organizations replacing religion in peoples' lives. She concludes her first critique saying, "The idea behind this article is no more than to present the idea of quasi-religions, but it seems to me that there is a whole issue missed." That issue, whether people can maintain their religious beliefs and still belong to quasi-religious organizations should have been elaborated upon in the source article. There are two major weaknesses in the source article, both of which are related to ideas presented in the source article.

In her second critique, Hannah still finds the authors' lack of discussion on why people are turning to quasi-religions a weakness and similar to her first critique, she includes potential reasons, "correcting" this weakness. A second weakness she points out is the parallel between quasi-religious organizations and cults. The relationship between quasi-religions and cults is not mentioned in the source article. The class had discussed cults, although not in the context of the source article. Hannah digresses from the issues raised in the article and in her own words, says she included some "irrelevant" material about cults. However, this might not be surprising given her own interest in forging links between the sociological and her developing sense of the world. It was at this time that events between the FBI and the Branch Davidians in Waco, Texas were unraveling and so-called religious cults were in the news daily.

Added material. Another feature of Hannah's texts that was consistent across the two years was her COMMENTARY. As seen in Table 3, the largest proportion of Hannah's critiques focus on suspended judgment. In 1992, .82 of her text was devoted to suspended judgment. In 1993 this proportion increased to .92. This can be explained through her selection and use of TOPICS that further her understanding of why quasi-religions have become important organizations in today's society. For example, in 1992 she states that "People are not quite interested in 'religion' as such, but are ready to open themselves up to new ideas and teachings. They are ready to give up old beliefs and try new ideas." In 1993, she continues in the same vein: "Another reason I see for the growth of quasi-religion is that it is new. Teenagers are always looking to rebel against the old and to find new and better ways of doing things than how Mom and Dad do things." Differences in her negative evaluative commentary, though slight (from .11 in 1992 to .04 in 1993), were due to her inquiry about the compatibility of religion and quasi-religion in peoples' lives, an evaluation of the authors' shortsightedness on this issue. Evaluation of such issues was not as apparent in her second critique. Her commentary on cults was more speculative than evaluative.

While the proportion of her evaluative commentary did not change much, the SOURCE OF SUPPORT for that commentary became more personal. In 1992, .46 of her support for her commentary was personal. A year later it increased to .63. The support she provides for the growth of quasi-religions is based on personal beliefs. She says, "In the past, before people were exposed to meditation and so forth, if an individual learned of this practice and began to meditate, they may have been locked up!". . . . I think that once people are shown a new way of doing something, they

jump at the chance, even something as fundamental as religion." In her earlier text, some of the support for this commentary was drawn from information that had been discussed in class. For example, her negative commentary about people maintaining their religious beliefs while belonging to self-help groups was based upon information taken from the source article.

Configuration. The configuration of TOPICS and their COMMENTS in Hannah's critiques did not change from one year to the next. She constructed texts that suggested a top-level organization in which she provided a collection of TOPICS with suspended judgment first before including a collection of TOPICS with either negative or positive commentary. This pattern of suspended judgment was more pronounced in her second critique, where the proportion of Hannah's suspended judgment increased by ten percent. The majority of the suspended commentary in both critiques included her ideas about a changing society and its appeal for quasi-religions. Thus, her critiques were primarily a response to her own questions about the appeal of quasi-religions in a contemporary society rather than an evaluation of the concept quasi-religion and its value to the sociological community. In her second critique, however, she included proportionally less evaluative commentary about the source article.

Length. The length (the total number of sentences in a text) was the same for both years--28 content units.

Perceptions of change. Hannah thinks of critique as having a content and a discursive component. When asked how her ideas about critique may have changed from year one to year two, she explained, "Well, in terms of religion, um, my opinion's just condensed a little more. I really have strayed far from my personal religion and have had minimal contact with other religions. So in terms of religion, it's about the same. Um, in terms of writing, um, I'm more scatter-brained with my writing, oddly enough [because] I haven't had to do much critical writing."

Her idea about content is based upon her personal experience with religion, not with other classes which may have changed her way of thinking about sociological issues, quasi-religions, or about religious attitudes in general. Without having a particular level of expertise on the topic, Hannah is not confident in writing a critique. "I feel [the authority to critique] is earned by someone's education on a subject," she explained. "If you feel educated enough to argue with Professor X on sexuality, then that's something you've given yourself. No one else has given that to you. But with someone, you know, for you to come along, and this person's already published, say, an article and they're known, for you to come up and say 'I have more information. Here is what it is.' Either whether it substantiates that or detracts from it, either way, that's because you feel you've educated yourself enough and you know, cleaned out the corners and found all the information."

As shown earlier in a quote about critique, Hannah believes her role in school is to learn what authorities have to say, not to contribute to their disciplinary conversation. In part this may also be because the practice of critique is not explicit in the curriculum. Since the term the critique was assigned, Hannah claims that she has done no "critical" writing. She has written "opinion papers" but these entailed writing about social issues without reference to any source article. These she found easy to do because she could write them off the top of her head.

Sally

> *[Critique] is very important because that's how, only through critique do we see the flaws in different studies--or even the benefits of different studies, so that's why I think writing critique does. I think critiquing itself gives validity to any sciencebecause you can say well, there's an argument going on and somehow that gives validity to it. Even in the natural sciences that goes on. Sociology as a science, social science, doesn't get much validity because it's really ... fluctuates a lot. Well, not fluctuates, but not solid. [And so, argument gives it validity] because if you can say, "well, there's these art--articles that say, to back this one up and then there's these articles that don't back it up." Then people can take their own opinion. . . If you're gonna argue, you have to know the arguments.*

For Sally, critique is an important part of the enterprise of sociology. On one level, critique provides a means by which to make judgments about the value of knowledge. Through critique, the "flaws and benefits" of studies are laid bare and discussed. Based on this information, people in the discipline can determine where they position themselves on issues. In addition, critique serves to legitimate disciplines. By defining their problematics and debating the weaknesses and strengths of their research, disciplines achieve some sort of credibility in the eyes of Sheila. This is even more important for the discipline of sociology, where, unlike the natural sciences, knowledge is not as seemingly stable. Sociological claims, according to Sally, are more susceptible to argument. When taking a stand in sociology, it is imperative to know the arguments related to an issue and to be able to substantiate one's position. As she says, "If you're gonna argue, you have to know the arguments." Critique is a way of grounding knowledge and validating the discipline. In both critiques Sheila is concerned with her own ability to substantiate her position. While Sheila agrees with the overall argument of the source article in both critiques, the focus of her commentary differs. The difference, she believes, is accounted for by the immediate environment. Without the exchange of ideas the classroom provides, she does not have access to the intellectual tools she thinks enable performance.

TOPICS. Similarities and differences in Hannah's selection of TOPICS can be seen by comparing the TOPICS included in her texts in year one and year two of the study. Intertextual links, that is, material included in both texts, is denoted by the bold face print. Arrows mark where the links occur in the two texts. Sometimes these links are made through the same TOPIC. Other times, the links are made through a different combination of TOPICS, a type of paraphrase of the same material. Figure 8 shows the TOPICS Sally selected to include in her critiques and the intertext she developed.

In her first critique Sally begins by mapping out the definition of critique. The definition consists of a lengthy quotation she has taken from the source article. She thinks including the definition is important because it let's the reader know "where their [the authors] assumptions are coming from." Once she has established that the definition provides an alternative belief about what constitutes religious and non religious, Sally moves into her evaluative commentary concerning the source article. She selects two particular points upon which to base her commentary. Her first commentary challenges the authors' claim that the American Folk definition is

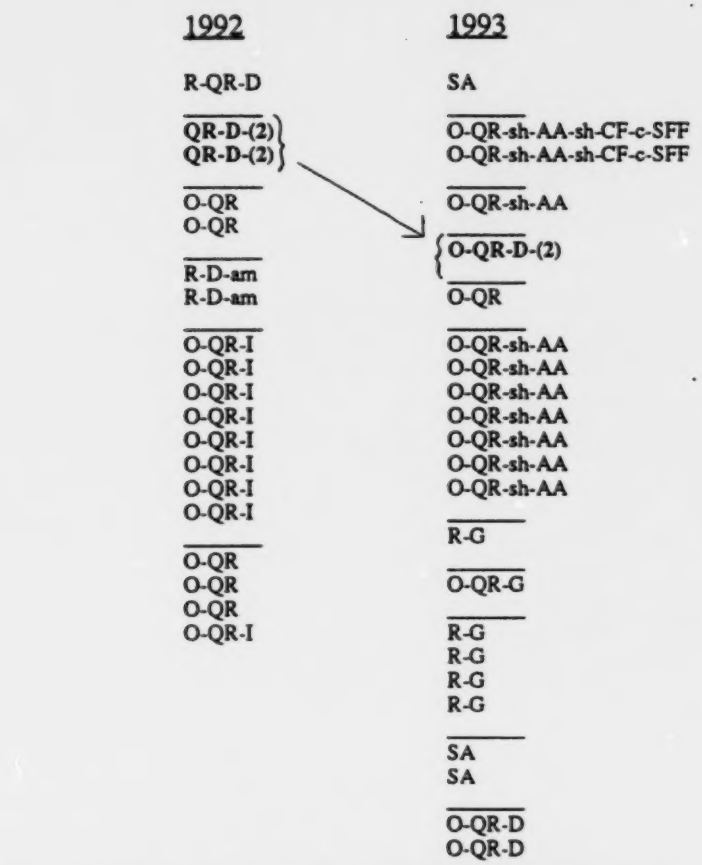

Figure 8. Sally's selection of TOPICS and their intertext

"beginning to lose its hold." Sally writes: "A person could be a member of Compassionate Friends and still be a Catholic. The quasi-religion seem to fulfill a need for a person that their mainstream religion cannot fulfill at that time." Religion can go hand in hand with quasi-religions. The second weakness Sally points out has to do with the authors treating all quasi-religions similarly. Sally contends that quasi-religious organizations are not monolithic and that the distinctions between them should be made more apparent. Her focus in this text is on quasi-religions and their relationship to religion and to each other.

The critique Sally constructs her second year resembles the first only in that she includes a definition of quasi-religion, the very same one that she included in her first critique. Sally begins her critique assertively, stating that "there are points in the article that I agree with and some thing which I disagree with." She then goes on to discuss the points with which she agrees before moving on to discuss the points with which she disagrees. She agrees that certain organizations are considered quasi-religious based upon Durkheim's definition of religion. Some of these organizations have religious qualities, in particular those that distinguish between the sacred and the secular. She provides examples of these. Then Sally goes on to say that she disagrees with the authors when they say that religion does not provide a therapeutic service. "I do disagree with Greil and Rudy when they say seem to be saying that

religions do not provide at its focus s therapeutic service," she states. She continues, "Parishes now [provide] therapeutic services such as support groups for single parents and divorced members." Sally concludes by saying that the authors did a good job of mapping out the ambiguous nature of quasi-religions and that she thinks that quasi-religions, if they are playing a larger art in our culture are doing so because people need some sort of religion in their lives. In this critique, Sally agrees that quasi-religions ideologically ambiguous but then shifts her commentary to discuss religions and their therapeutic services.

Added material. Like some of the other students, the change in Sally's stance is also illustrated in changes in her commentary. As seen in Table 3, Sally included more negative commentary in her first critique (.58) than in her second (.26). Although Sally supports the authors in their attempt to describe a new religious phenomena in both critiques, her treatment of support differs from year one to year two. This accounts for some of the varying proportions of negative and positive commentary. In the first text Sally states that she thinks that the "ways Greil and Rudy define religion and quasi-religion is appropriate" but she does not explain why they are appropriate. Instead she includes the definition they provide, quoting directly from the source article. She then moves on to articulate her areas of disagreement with the authors. Sally develops her negative commentary by elaborating and providing examples. This is seen in her discussion of the American Folk definition losing hold. She not only makes this claim, but backs it up with concrete examples. She herself has stated that evidence is important in substantiating an argument. The development of negative commentary on the two points accounts for .58 of her text.

In her second critique, the proportion of negative commentary drops and the positive increases. One of the reasons this occurs is because in this critique, Sally does explain why quasi-religions may be considered on the margins of the sacred and the secular. Whereas in her first critique she did not include an elaboration of her position or evidence for this claim, she does in the second year. "In thinking of Durkheim's definition of religion these groups do have some religious qualities, such as distinguishing between the profane and sacred," she explains. Then she continues, providing examples to demonstrate this claim. Her negative commentary is proportionally less than in the first year. One reason for this is that Sally only discusses one problematic area. the authors imply that traditional religions do not provide a therapeutic service to their parishioners, but Sally disagrees. "We find priests, rabbis, and ministers being therapists to the members of their congregations," she says. Yet, this negative commentary is not proportionally the focus of her text.

An area of marked change is in her use of a source of support. In her first year, Sally substantiated her claims .68 of the time with disciplinary support. This increased to .83 in her second critique. An illustration in this difference can be seen in her elaboration of her support of the concept quasi-religion. She agrees with the authors that these organizations exist and that their definition is good. In the first critique Sally explains, "The key word in their definition is anomalous, which means abnormal. The organizations they discuss do not fit neatly into the American definition of religion; they are abnormal." Sally seems to be showing the logic of why this definition makes sense to her. In year two, she demonstrates her support by using sociological information, disciplinary support. She applies Durkheim's definition of religion as a means of backing up her position that quasi-religions do have characteristics of the sacred and the secular.

Configuration. Another area in Sally's critiques that demonstrates transformations is the manner in which she configured her TOPICS and COMMENTS. In her first year, Sally's text suggests a TOPIC-COMMENT Separate Configuration, which is evidenced by a collection of TOPICS with suspended commentary before moving on to provide a collection of TOPICS with evaluative commentary. In other words, Sally's first critique was heavy in suspended judgment at the beginning. Then she moved on to provide evaluative commentary. This changed the second year. Sally's evaluative commentary was interwoven with the TOPICS as she brought them up for commentary. In other words, Sally's second critique was a collection of TOPICS and their COMMENTS, a TOPIC-COMMENT Integrated Configuration. The evaluation of the source article is ongoing throughout the critique.

Length. Like some of the other students, Sally does not include considerably more content units in her second critique. Her first text included 19 and her second included 23, a difference of four content units. This difference could be attributed to her elaboration of her agreement with the source article.

Perceptions of change. In some ways, Sally's critiques have not changed. She still believes that the authors wrote about a timely and important topic. "I said that how they defined religion and quasi-religion is appropriate and I'm almost saying the same thing [in year 2]," she explains. But the manner in which she presents her position is different. The classroom had a positive effect on Sally. Without the level of intellectual engagement the classroom provided, Sally says her ability to perform changed. "I was thinking differently about quasi-religions at the different times. Because at the time since I was taking the class when I wrote this paper [the first critique] being really into religion, the idea of it and being able to go more into here where now I'm not as much into it [in the second critique]. I mean look, the privatization of religion," she explains about some of the different terms she used in her first critique. Some of these transformations had to do with her use of vocabulary and key concepts and their role in sounding more sociological. It was also important for Sally to be able to use these concepts as a means of support for her position. "I had more time to think about it also since we were in that class of *Sociology of Religion*. There were different ways of backing things up," she states.

Like Amy, the classroom had a motivating force in shaping Sally's text. For Amy, the classroom provided an audience with whom she wanted to dialogue. For Sally, the classroom provided her the ongoing intellectual tools she felt were necessary to be credible. Being in the classroom made Sally feel more prepared to write the critique. She had more access to information. " I could have went and got the book and said, "this is Durkheim's definition of religion'," she said. At the heart of Sally's conception of critique is evidence, evidence relevant to the enterprise of the discipline.

Theresa

> *[Critique] plays a big role because sociologists all have their own little opinions about culture and ethnocity [sic] and the way people are socialized in different cultures. And when you write critiques about one and you pass it out to the sociological community, you're gonna get all these, all these responses back, whether it be good or bad. And any, any kind of response is good because that means people are thinking. If you get no response back, you*

would worry because it means people are not thinking about your ideas, coming back with pros and cons. . . . that's why sociology, I think it's why I picked it because people were open-minded primarily. . . .with sociology and different cultures you can't really be close-minded in other cultures if you wanna learn about them.

For Theresa, critique is a medium through which people can learn about the world and each other. Critique enables an exchange of ideas. At the same time, according to Theresa, "you're contradicting somebody else's [work] and maybe strengthening somebody else's." It is a comfortable task for her. "I enjoy critiquing. I enjoy writing, so to me, I'm very comfortable with it. I could critique *anything*," she explains [my emphasis]. Moreover, Theresa feels that "there's not wrong answers when you critique something." She feels that the purpose of critique is to understand where she stands on particular issues, a task of self-discovery. It is also to present her readers with a different perspective. But it need not necessarily make people reflect on their own beliefs or change their point of view. "[Critique] doesn't make me change really my opinion but it makes me change the way that I would view somebody else having this, a different opinion." It would make her more tolerant, she elaborates, make her understand somebody else's point of view. The goals of critique for Theresa are compatible with what she believes is the goal of sociology: to help people understand the world. Critique can do that through the exchange of ideas. Theresa shares her opinion on quasi-religions, not the authors' treatment of it, with other potential readers of her text. However, in her first critique, Theresa's evaluative commentary was not as explicit as it was in her second critique. In the first year, when her text was being graded, Theresa was hesitant to provide an opinion, whereas in her second critique she is more explicit in her commentary. Her selection of TOPICS and their treatment illustrate the effect of the classroom on the construction of her critiques for both years.

TOPICS. Similarities and differences in Theresa's selection of TOPICS can be seen by comparing the TOPICS included in her texts in year one and year two of the study. Intertextual links, that is, material included in both texts, is denoted by the bold face print. Arrows mark where the links occur in the two texts. Sometimes these links are made through the same TOPIC. Other times, the links are made through a different combination of TOPICS, a type of paraphrase of the same material. Figure 9 shows the TOPICS Theresa selected to include in her critiques and the intertext she developed.

Theresa begins each critique similarly, introducing the concept of quasi-religion and explaining its contingent definition on religion. In 1992 she begins "When I finished reading "On the Margins of the Sacred," it seemed to me that the issue of quasi-religions dealt mainly with how they were perceived by two specific viewpoints: the sacred and the secular." She then elaborates on these two viewpoints before launching into her opinion. "The term, then," she explains, "quasi-religions is not utilized in the same manner as religion, but it has similar dynamics of religion in a much broader context. To me, this is just introducing more labels into an already over-labeled world." At the end of her text she concludes that "This quasi-religious term just adds another label to society, but perhaps with all the debate and awareness of the differences in religious and so-called non-religious affiliations people will think hard before committing to something that could have some damaging consequences to them, mentally and/or physically." Her text suggests that, although she might not like this new term, she thinks that quasi-relgions serve a purpose. Theresa never comes out and directly says that she believes these organizations are or are not sacred

or secular. And while a reader might think that she has a negative view of these organizations, throughout her text, Theresa constructs parallels between quasi-religions and religions, which make it difficult to determine a stance. At one point, for example, she states that "If anyone should say that quasi-religions are existing only to drain unseeing individual pockets, the same could be said about religious affiliations, especially the Catholic Church." The first critique is not direct in its evaluative commentary.

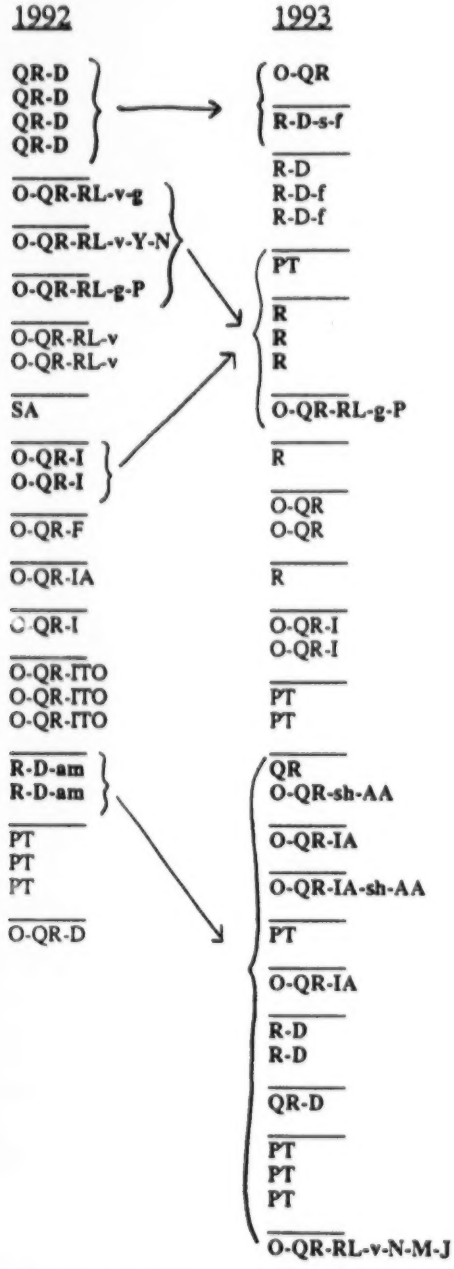

Figure 9. Theresa's selection of TOPICS and their intertext

But in her second critique we see an evaluative move early on as Theresa comments on the very same information. In 1993, she begins her text saying, "The above article [On the Margins of the Sacred] differentiates between secular and sacred ideas and goes on to explain the new trend in religion known as quasi-religions." In this text, however, she examines the assumptions behind such a proposal: "However, the article is based on the assumption that everyone practices religion in a similar way." This commentary is taken up later in her critique as she elaborates the reasons quasi-religions are not really "quasi." As in her first text, Theresa makes it clear that "The term quasi-religion to many, may be seen as another stereotyping device and another word to add to an already vast collection of religious jargon." But then she continues to explain why she thinks the term is not valuable. She sees religion as a belief system and a means to socialize and influence its members, to maintain order in a community. Quasi-religions, on the other hand, have organized and become popular because religions aren't moving along with the times. "Quasi-religions seems to be a philosophy people expound on primarily because established churches are not moving along with the times we are currently facing, which brings about different groups to help people cope with the changes they are facing." However, Theresa believes that "there is no quasi in religion. A person either believes something or doesn't." Finally, she states that to her, quasi-religion is primarily a philosophy.

Added material. As mentioned earlier, Theresa was not comfortable critiquing the source article when she constructed her first text. The result is a critique that primarily includes suspended judgment (.67), followed by positive commentary (.25) and then some scattered negative commentary (.08). The first critique provides an overview of the authors' major premises. This summary accounts for the majority of her suspended judgment. The latter portion of her critique is primarily positive commentary in which Theresa appears to come to the defense of quasi-religious organizations. The parallels she constructs between what she calls "mainstream" religions and quasi-religions suggests she supports the concept quasi-religion. "After all, she states, "it [religious belief] is a judgment value and a person has their first right amendments which allows them freedom to pick a religion without persecution." The little negative commentary she does provide refers to "introducing more labels into an already over-labeled world." This is never elaborated as she says that this practice has its "ups and downs." Thus, Theresa's commentary in her first critique is sometimes conflicting and often unexplained. Quasi-religions can be sacred or they can be secular. Quasi-religions can be beneficial to members or they can be detrimental.

In 1993 she is more direct and assertive in her claims. Although her critique includes predominantly suspended judgment commentary, her evaluative position shifts. "There is no quasi in religion. A person either believes in something or doesn't, she explains. She believes that quasi-religions should have a philosophical rather than sacred status. Her commentary is developed. Thirty five percent of her critique is negative commentary, .23 of which refers to her position that quasi-religions are philosophies rather than religions. The suspended judgment she includes in her critique is not an overview of the source article (much of it was in 1992). It is background information that a reader needs to know to understand her negative commentary. For example, Theresa includes her definition of religion: "Religion, in my opinion, are beliefs which people hold dear and socialize their children and influence others as a way of maintaining order and a sense of community." This helps a reader understand later why Theresa rejects the sacred in quasi-religions and places them in the realm of philosophy.

Both years Theresa's commentary is based on personal and disciplinary support. The proportions are consistent across both years. Approximately .45 of her support is based on her personally based and approximately .55 is disciplinary based. However, there are qualitative differences in the use of her disciplinary support. In 1992 Theresa includes more suspended judgment based on disciplinary support, constructing an overview of main ideas in the source article. But in 1993 she provides disciplinary support for her negative commentary, asserting her beliefs through disciplinary reasoning. For example, she states that "In summary, quasi-religion sounds like religion and functions in certain ways as a religion but it is not truly sacred enough for some to be termed religion." This claim is made after a discussion of different quasi-religions and their members' attitudes toward their sacred or secular status. Theresa is synthesizing disciplinary information to assert a claim--a claim not found in the source text.

Configuration. Transformations evidenced in Theresa's commentary are also suggested in the way she configured TOPICS and their COMMENTS. In 1992 she constructed a critique that included a collection of TOPICS with suspended commentary before moving on to provide a collection of TOPICS with evaluative commentary. This changed the second year. Although proportionally her commentary was predominantly suspended judgment, Theresa was more negative and her negative commentary was interwoven with the TOPICS as she brought them up for commentary. In other words, Theresa's second critique was a collection of TOPICS and their COMMENTS, a TOPIC-COMMENT Integrated Configuration. In this second text, Theresa includes particular TOPICS, not to summarize the source article but to evaluate it.

Length. Theresa's second critique (31) has more content units than her first (24). In her second critique, she summarizes the source article less (.06 compared with .17 of her content units), introduces more TOPICS for evaluative commentary, and elaborates upon her negative stance, providing the reasoning behind it..

Perceptions of change. The changes in Theresa's critiques are not due to a new way of thinking about critique or about the topic but to feeling less constraint in writing it. She no longer was taking the course when she constructed her second critique and had no pressure to perform. Without the pressure, she says, "I'm a little bit more straightforward now. With um, the one I wrote last year, I beat around the bush a lot because I was kinda leery turning it in 'cause I didn't really know how to write the article because I really didn't get it, much basis for like, an outline for writing it. Um, my opinions haven't changed. They're still the same." Theresa described herself earlier as someone who could write a critique on "*anything.* " Yet, she did not feel confident without particular guidelines that could be used as a map of the critical terrain. Why?

Theresa explains that in her first critique she was worried about how the professor would grade her. "When I know I'm not gonna be penalized for what I'm gonna be writing down, then...I'll just come straight out and say what I'm gonna say . . . . the entire time I wrote this I kept thinkin' that, you know, Professor X is not going to like this idea, not gonna like that idea because they conflict with what Professor X believes, so I'm not gonna write it. So instead, I just you know, pussy-footed around the issue and just didn't even get to the issue." The outline Theresa may have been looking for was not necessarily about critique. Instead it sounds as if she wanted to know the professor's opinion about the article so that she could craft her own opinion in a way that would be rewarded. For someone who thought critique

provided a forum for the exchange of opinions, Theresa opted not to take a stance in this particular classroom.

Table 3
Comparison of Proportion of Critical Commentary in Written Critique for Year One and Year Two

Student	Year One Commentary			Year Two Commentary		
	Positive	Negative	Suspended	Positive	Negative	Suspended
Amy	.00	.67	.33	.13	.13	.74
Enya	.59	.06	.35	.42	.37	.21
Hannah	.07	.11	.82	.04	.04	.92
Sally*	.16	.58	.26	.65	.26	.13
Tom	.04	.82	.14	.03	.82	.15
Theresa	.25	.08	.67	.00	.35	.65

* The total for Sally in year two exceeds 100 due to negative and positive commentary within the same content unit.

Table 4
Comparison of Proportion of Source of Support in Written Critique for Year One and Year Two

Student	Year One Support		Year Two Support	
	Personal	Disciplinary	Personal	Disciplinary
Amy	.03	.97	.04	.96
Enya	.29	.71	.26	.74
Hannah	.46	.54	.63	.37
Sally	.32	.68	.17	.83
Tom	.09	.91	.09	.91
Theresa	.46	.54	.45	.55

Conclusion

All but one of the students wrote critiques that focused on TOPICS that differed from those they selected last year. However, students who included TOPICS that were different the second year evidenced an intertext in the texts they constructed, too. For some students like Enya and Theresa, some of the TOPICS included in their first text but not developed, later became the substance of the second critique. For others such as Hannah the inclusion of similar TOPICS served as a framework for her texts. By posing similar questions, she could fill the void the authors created in their text and craft a "constructive critique." In the case of Sally, the use of the same TOPICS was to provide some evidence of the concept. Quoting the authors' definition gave her own text credibility. And still for others like Amy and Theresa, the intertexts they

developed illustrated similar trains of thought about the concept from one year to the next.

All five of these students had changed their stances on the source article since the time they had read it for the class in which it was originally assigned. Two of the students who had agreed with the content in the source article, Enya and Theresa, now disagreed. For Enya, the change was due to new information she had learned in another class that gave her new insights into the subject. Theresa, without the perceived threat of a hostile audience (the teacher who disagreed with her opinion), constructed a critique that reflected her own thoughts more clearly.

Three students who originally disagreed with the source article, now were more supportive of it. Amy, like Theresa, felt empowered without the teacher as evaluator. She constructed a critique that reflected more of her thoughts about the complexity of quasi-religions. Another student, Sally, read the text differently this year because she was not in the classroom. Unlike Amy and Theresa, Sally thought the class helped her to think about the concept in ways she could not when she was out of the intellectual environment. Sally originally included more negative commentary in her text but shifted when she provided more detail about areas of agreement. And finally, Hannah, who included proportionally more suspended judgment in her critiques, provided more of a balance in her evaluation, although both the negative and positive commentary was slight. For Hannah, these shifts are related to shifts in her thinking about the everyday world. Her suspended judgment tended to be an explication of her own view of quasi-religions and their social significance. The sixth student, Ted, whose selection of TOPICS was more similar to the text he constructed last year maintains the same position as last year and much of his evaluative comments are similar.

Overall, however, these students were still including proportionally more suspended judgment in their critiques than either positive or negative evaluative commentary. For example, in year one, students included .18 positive commentary, .39 negative commentary, and .43 suspended judgment in their texts. In year two, the proportions did not change much. Students included .21 positive commentary, .33 negative commentary, and .46 suspended judgment. Most of these students generally included proportionally more disciplinary source of support in both years (.73), with the exception of Hannah, who included much more personal support the second year. Although the students perceived shifts in their thinking about the source article, many of them still included proportionally more suspended judgment based upon a disciplinary source of support. Thus, many students allocated much of their rhetorical space to summarizing or to interpreting the source article rather than evaluating it, either in part or whole.

In year one, all students in Phase 1 averaged 28 TOPIC-COMMENT units (the thematic focus of a sentence and its commentary). The six students in this study, however, constructed critiques of 24 TOPIC-COMMENT units, a number below the average for the class. This year, the six students averaged 26 TOPIC-COMMENT units. As seen from the number of the students' TOPIC-COMMENT units from years one and two, four students wrote longer critiques, one a shorter critique, and another student had the same number of TOPIC-COMMENT units.

Analysis of the interviews with the students shows that two factors contributed to some of the changes in students' texts: 1) classroom environment; and 2) new knowledge. Issues raised concerning these two factors include the role of the

classroom environment on writing performance, the role of evaluative practice and its transference across situations, and finally, the role of sources on thinking about the complexity of issues.

The classroom has generally been considered a place for learning and exploring in the disciplines. This is the case when students are able to make the most of classroom readings and discussions. As one student, Sally, demonstrated in Phase 2, performance may not get better with time, but with exposure to an environment that lends itself to writing a quality critique. At the same time the classroom can promote the learning and exploring of issues, it can also preclude students from thinking through complex material as they perform for a grade, as some of the students in this study explained. Because students were focused on getting a good grade, they did not take risks and did not address some of the more complex issues they saw in the source material. Specifically, how might we teach strategies of exploration that will allow students to deal with complexity and at the same time, provide them the strategies for writing that will allow them quality performance?

Another issue that surfaced in the interviews is how practice in other situations might affect how students critique. Some of the students in this study mentioned that practice critiquing in other classes has had a positive impact on their ability to critique. A final issue raised in Study 2, Phase 2 concerns the use of source texts on students' thinking about complex issues. Many of the students who constructed better quality critiques in Phase 1 were able to import information from outside the source article, be it from classroom discussions or readings. Other students brought their general knowledge of sociology to the task. In Phase 2 students reconsidered the source article in ways they did not last year, partially because of new knowledge they had learned in the intervening year. This new information made them think differently about the premises proposed in the source article. How might using multiple sources that conflict and/or that deal with different perspectives and/or that can be brought to bear on an issue alter how students work through material to critique information?

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Appendix A
Text Template

Introduction

1. Quasi-religion
    1. It is the topic of this essay
2. Quasi-religion
    2. It is defined and its interpretation is justified in the first section of the essay
3. Organizations-quasi-religious
    3. Examples are provided in the second section of article
4. Organizations-quasi-religious
    4. Their features are then delineated and used to explain why they place themselves between the sacred and the secular
5. Organizations-quasi-religious
    5. Their significance is assessed and what their study says about changes in the understanding of religion in contemporary America is summarized in the conclusion of the essay

Definitions

6. Quasi-religion-definition
    6. It is contingent upon a definition of religion
7. Religion-definition
    7. It is debated by functional and substantive supporters
8. Religion-definition-functional
    8. It emphasizes an "encompassing system of meaning" or the ability to "relate man to the ultimate conditions of his existence"
9. Religion-definition-substantive
    9. It makes reference to the sacred and the supernatural

Definitions-Advantages and Disadvantages

10. Religion-definition-functional-advantage
    10. It allows sociologists to look at beliefs that resemble religious phenomena
11. Religion-definition-functional-disadvantage
    11. The concept of religion is so broad it becomes meaningless
12. Religion-definition-functional-disadvantage
    12. It lumps together the nonsupernatural and supernatural, whose consequences may differ sociologically
13. Religion-definition-substantive-advantage
    13. It doesn't lump such phenomena together
14. Religion-definition-substantive-advantage
    14. It accords more with American folk definitions of religion, more commonsense definitions

Quasi-religion-Definition (1)

15. Quasi-religion-definition (1)
    15. It is a compromise between substantive and functional supporters' views
16. Quasi-religion-definition (1)
    16. It refers to activities and organizations that involve expressions of ultimate concern, or organizational dynamics similar to those of religious organizations (functionally defined), but that don't have a belief in the supernatural or superempirical
17. Quasi-religion definition (1)
    17. Running and the pursuit of health are examples
18. Quasi-religion-definition (1)

18. Radical political groups, weight-loss groups, human potential groups and companies like Amway are examples

Religion-American Folk Definition

19. Religion-definition-substantive-disadvantage
    19. It makes sociological analysis slave to commonsense definitions of reality
20. Religion-definition-American folk
    20. It focuses on a transcendent deity ("God")
21. Religion-definition-American folk
    21. It centers around churches and worships a transcendent deity
22. Religion-definition-American folk
    22. It implicitly reflects a transcendent worldview that believes that there is an empirically available natural world governed by laws
23. "Religious"-definition-American Folk
    23. It is a person who believes in an unseen world not governed by empirical laws
24. "Nonreligious"-definition-American Folk
    24. It is a person who does not believe in an unseen world
25. "Religious"-definition-American Folk
    25. It is made anomalous by the definition of religion as meaning "making reference to the transcendent deity of the Judeo-Christian tradition"
26. Religion-definition-substantive
    26. It buys into the American Folk definition that equates religion and the transcendent
27. Religion-definition-substantive-American folk
    27. Transcendence is assumed with the belief that it is possible to distinguish between the sacred and secular

Religion-Functional-Substantive Errors

28. Religion- definitions-substantive-functional-error
    28. They assume religion exists independent of peoples' conception ofit
29. Religion- definitions-substantive-functional-error
    29. They are objectivist in intent
30. Religion- definitions-substantive-functional-error
    30. They determine objectively whether a given phenomena is religious or nonreligious
31. Religion-definitions-substantive-functional-error
    31. They should be replaced with a subjectivist position on religion/nonreligion

Religion-Definitions-Objectivist-Subjectivist

32. Religion-definition-subjectivist
    32. The proper study of religion is what people do when they think they're doing religion
33. Religion-definition-objectivist
    33. It is uninteresting to separate the religious and nonreligious
34. Religion-definition-subjectivist

34. People's conceptualization of religious overrides sociological categories and determines their "religious/nonreligious" behavior

35. Religion-definition-subjectivist
    35. The view of a proper definition of religion leads to a different conceptualization of quasi-religion

Quasi-religion-Definition (2)

36. Quasi-religion-definition (2)
    36. It doesn't reflect characteristics of the secular or sacred
37. Quasi-religion-definition (2)
    37. It has an anomalous status, given contemporary folk definitions of religion
38. Quasi-religion-definition (2)
    38. It refers to organizations that are viewed as "sort-of" religious by themselves or others
39. Quasi-religion-definition (2)
    39. It uses organizational and ideological tension and ambiguity regarding the group's worldview, perspective, and regimen to facilitate affiliation and commitment
40. Quasi-religion-definition (2)
    40. It rides the fence between the sacred and the secular
41. Quasi-religion-definition (2)
    41. The religious/nonreligious nature depends on the emphasis of leaders and members in different circumstances

Organizations-self-help groups-Alcoholics Anonymous

42. Organizations-quasi-religious
    42. They include self-help groups and new religious movements
43. Organizations-quasi-religious-self-help group-Alcoholics Anonymous
    43. Students have made analogies between its structure, activities, dynamics, and ideology of religious organizations
44. Organizations-quasi-religious-self-help group-Alcoholics Anonymous
    44. Its religious characteristics include a conception of the sacred, ceremonies and rituals, creedal statements, conversion experiences, and an A.A. philosophy of life
45. Organizations-quasi-religious-self-help group-Alcoholics Anonymous
    45. Its religious features are obvious but its status as a religion is denied
46. Organizations-quasi-religious-self-help group-Alcoholics Anonymous
    46. Its denial as a religion is ambiguous
47. Organizations-quasi-religious-self-help group-Alcoholics Anonymous
    47. Its members and literature say it's spiritual, not religious
48. Organizations-quasi-religious-self-help group-Alcoholics Anonymous
    48. "Twelve Steps" mentions a "Higher Power"
49. Organizations-quasi-religious-self-help group-Alcoholics Anonymous
    49. The term "Higher Power" indicates a range of interpretations from the traditional Judeo-Christian God to the group itself
50. Organizations-quasi-religious-self-help group-Alcoholics Anonymous
    50. The range of views allow members to band together under one umbrella

Organizations-self-help groups-Compassionate Friends

51. Organizations-quasi-religious-self-help groups
    51. They are characterized by similar ideological ambiguity

52. Organizations-quasi-religious-self-help group-Compassionate Friends
    52. It was founded by clergymen for parents who have experienced the death of a child
53. Organizations-quasi-religious-self-help group-Compassionate Friends
    53. It has specific ritualistic meetings and emphasizes that group sharing of "experimental knowledge" allows for the transcendence of human condition
54. Organizations-quasi-religions-self-help group-Compassionate Friends
    54. Members develop meaningfulness and purpose through sharing and empathy
55. Organizations-quasi-religious-self-help group-Compassionate Friends
    55. The interpretation of death occurs within a religious framework
56. Organizations-quasi-religious-self-help group-Compassionate Friends
    56. Theological explanations are avoided because of group diversity
57. Organizations-quasi-religious-self-help group-Compassionate Friends
    57. The literature declares no religious philosophic ideology

Organizations-quasi-religious-human potential movement-est

58. Organizations-quasi-religious-human potential movement
    58. They are easily conceptualized as quasi-religions
59. Organizations-quasi-religious-human potential movement-est
    59. It remains one of the best known [in this movement]
60. Organizations-quasi-religious-human potential movement-est
    60. It states people are in control of their own experience
61. Organizations-quasi-religious-human potential movement-est
    61. It communicates epistemological, psychological, and psychoanalytic facts about human experience, not religious morals and beliefs

Organizations-quasi-religious-human potential movement

62. Organizations-quasi-religious-self-help groups
    62. They emphasize group unity to transcend typical existence
63. Organizations-quasi-religious-human potential movement
    63. The quasi-religious-nature is expressed in the idea of the "transpersonal"
64. Organizations-quasi-religious-human potential movement
    64. "Transpersonal "refers to experiences which transcend typical human experience
65. Organizations-quasi-religious-human potential movement
    65. Members say God is not a meaningful concept, eschew the term religion, and employ the term spiritual to describe experience
66. Organizations-quasi-religious-human potential movement
    66. They premise that greater awareness and perception allow for one to become spiritualized
67. Organizations-quasi-religious-human potential movement
    67. A Forum spokesperson claimed it similar to a religion

Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Spritual Frontiers Fellowship

68. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship
    68. It sees itself as a scientific religious philosophy aimed at uncovering the nature of "spiritual laws"
69. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship

69. Members solve personal problems through meditation, prayer, positive thinking, spiritual formulas, and making use of proper spiritual laws

70. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship

70. Members are not expected to believe on faith

71. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship

71. Members are encouraged to verify concepts through their own experience

72. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship

72. A study group was called a class, not a congregation

73. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship

73. Participants were called students, not members

74. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship

74. The ideas participants discussed were called theories, concepts, and ideas, not beliefs

Organizations-quasi-religious-new age -Dianetics

75. Organizations-quasi-religious-new age-Scientology

75. It began in 1949 as Dianetics and presented itself as a modern science of mental health

76. Organizations-quasi-religious-new age-Dianetics

76. The basic premise of Dianetics was that normal minds are troubled and less effective because of past painful events called "engrams"

77. Organizations-quasi-religious-new age-Dianetics

77. The purpose of Dianetic therapy was to restore "engrams" to consciousness and erase them from the "reactive mind," allowing the "analytical mind" to develop to full capacity

78. Organizations-quasi-religious-new age-Dianetics

78. A person whose reactive mind had been erased was known as "clear"

Organizations-quasi-religious-new age-Scientology

79. Organizations-quasi-religious-new age-Scientology

79. It was founded in 1952 by L. Ron Hubbard

80. Organizations-quasi-religious-new age-Scientology

80. It differs from Dianetics theoretically, technologically, and in its self-presentation

81. Organizations-quasi-religious-new age-Scientology

81. It added the concept of "Thetan," a being of pure spirit that allowed itself to become matter, that has been reincarnated in successive human bodies and that represents one's true self

82. Organizations-quasi-religious-new age-Scientology

82. The meaning of "clear" was changed to achieving a better understanding of one's true nature as Thetan, and the process of becoming clear was aided by the "E- meter"

83. Organizations-quasi-religious-new age-Scientology

83. It was declared a religion by Hubbard

84. Organizations-quasi-religious-new age-Scientology

84. Hubbard has been accused of creating a religious front to avoid paying taxes, to protect himself from fraudulent uses of the E-meter, and to gain legitimacy from the wider community

85. Organizations-quasi-religious-new age-Scientology

85. Scientologists describe Scientology as an "applied religious philosophy"

86. Organizations-quasi-religious-new age-Scientology
    86. Much of Scientology's ethos is secular
87. Organizations-quasi-religious-new age-Scientology
    87. The principles are presented as axioms, not as creedal statements, and services are rendered for a fee to customers
88. Organizations-quasi-religious-new age-Scientology
    88. Some official pronouncements describe it as a science, not a religion
89. Organizations-quasi-religious-new age-Scientology
    89. It was described by Hubbard in 1963 as the "science of how to change conditions. . . . And it is the ONLY science of improvement Man has that really works."
90. Organizations-quasi-religious-new age-Scientology
    90. Hubbard has distinguished between Scientology proper, which includes therapeutic services, and Para Scientology, which includes religious aspects
91. Organizations-quasi-religious-new age-Scientology
    91. Hubbard advises ministers to stay away from Para Scientology with potential converts
92. Organizations-quasi-religious-new age-Scientology
    92. Hubbard advises ministers to emphasize that man has a spiritual side and that Scientology solves social problems

Organizations-quasi-religious-new age-Transcndental Meditation

93. Organizations-quasi-religious-new age-Transcendental Meditation
    93. It has gone to court to assert it is not a religion
94. Organizations-quasi-religious-new age-Transcendental Meditation
    94. It appears to be religious in nature and derives from Hindu religious tradition
95. Organizations-quasi-religious-new age-Transcendental Meditation
    95. Until 1979, TM tried to present a secular face to the world, but the U.S. Court of Appeals affirmed a lower court decision that TM was religious in character and couldn't be taught in public schools
96. Organizations-quasi-religious-new age-Transcendental Meditation
    96. It presented itself as a rationalized, streamlined method of achieving happiness and personal efficacy through meditation
97. Organizations-quasi-religious-new age-Transcendental Meditation
    97. It presented itself as a body of scientifically validated techniques, and was successful in attesting to its efficacy in scientific journals
98. Organizations-quasi-religious-new age-Transcendental Meditation
    98. It was offered as classes like a school subject to be mastered by students
99. Organizations-quasi-religious-new age-Transcendental Meditation
    99. It presented itself to the public as not entirely secular
100. Organizations-quasi-religious-new age-Transcendental Meditation
    100. The classes began with a traditional invocation
101. Organizations-quasi-religious-new age-Transcendental Mediation
    101. Introductory lectures appeared secular, while advanced lectures contained religious elements
102. Organizations-quasi-religious-new age-Transcendental Meditation
    102. In 1977, TM signaled a more religious self-presentation with the announcement of "Siddhis," performances of higher states of consciousness
103. Organizations-quasi-religious-new age-Transcendental Meditation

103. It promised meditation could give initiates the ability to become invisible, to levitate, and to move objects through mental powers

104. Organizations-quasi-religious-new age-Transcendental Meditation
104. The organization still exists but its growth is different than it was in the 60's and 70's

Organizations-quasi-religious-features

105. Organizations-quasi-religious-features
105. The illustrations are limited to thumbnail sketches due to space constraints

106. Organizations-quasi-religious-features
106. The organizations are ambiguous to adherents, prospective adherents, and the general public

107. Organizations-quasi-religious-features
107. They present themselves as "sort-of" religious and/or "sort-of" secular

108. Organizations-quasi-religious-features
108. They represent an array of beliefs, practices, and organizational structures, but they share some salient features

109. Organizations-quasi-religious-features
109. They don't sponsor activities that take the form associated with the folk definition of religion

110. Organizations-quasi-religious-features
110. They don't focus attention on a concretely defined supreme being

111. Organizations-quasi-religious-features
111. In AA, the "Higher Power" may be God, but then it might not be

112. Organizations-quasi-religious-features
112. Scientology's theology deals more with abstract forces than deities

113. Organizations-quasi-religious-features
113. SSF talks about spiritual laws, divinity within oneself, and not a personal relationship with God

Organizations-quasi-religious-goals

114. Organizations-quasi-religious-goals
114. Their primary goal is to provide a therapeutic service

115. Organizations-quasi-religious-goals
115. Presenting a revealed truth is subordinated to the goal of helping people make their lives better

116. Organizations-quasi-religious-goals
116. Their ideology is pervaded by a pragmatic theme

117. Organizations-quasi-religious-goals
117. What is true is not as important as what works

118. Organizations-quasi-religious-goals
118. For AA it is achieving sobriety and helping others achieve it

119. Organizations-quasi-religious-goals
119. AA members are urged not to understand everything, but to get on with the program

120. Organizations-quasi-religious-goals
120. AA has a saying, which is: "Utilize, don't analyze"

121. Organizations-quasi-religious-goals
121. The goal of Occult and New Age groups is also what works
122. Organizations-quasi-religious-goals
122. Jach Pursel, a channeler, said in response to the belief in Lazarus: Lazarus could be different part of me and if you want to believe that, it's OK, because what really matters is the value gained from it
123. Organizations-quasi-religious-goals
123. While the ultimate goal is personal betterment, it is made clear that spiritual growth and the transcending of limits of oneself are a necessary means to an end
124. Organizations-quasi-religious-goals
124. In AA one must give oneself up to a "Higher Power" before one can achieve sobriety
125. Organizations-quasi-religious-goals
125. In Compassionate Friends, parents must transcend the human condition to cope with grief
126. Organizations-quasi-religious-goals
126. In SSF the goal is to achieve spiritual growth by identifying oneself with the divine inner self

Organizations-quasi-religious-ITO'S

127. Organizations-quasi-religious
127. They are Identity Transforming Organizations (ITO'S)
128. Organizations-quasi-religious-ITO's
128. They encourage adherents to undergo radical shifts in their worldview and identity
129. Organizations-quasi-religious-ITO's
129. They encapsulate the individual within the confines of the organization to provide situations to help form a new identity
130. Organizations-quasi-religious-ITO's
130. A commitment to them requires that people identify their goals and interests with those of the organization
131. Organizations-quasi-religious-ITO'S
131. A person subordinates the ego to the will of the group and the person feels "institutionalized awe" for the power of the group through the commitment mechanisms of mortification
132. Organizations-quasi-religious-ITO'S
132. They are ITO's from the perspective of core members, but not short term clients
133. Organizations-quasi-religious-ITO'S
133. MSIA offers a series of courses called Insight
134. Organizations-quasi-religious-ITO'S
134. In MSIA the first two courses (Insight I and II) are secular in tone but the third course (Insight III) introduces advanced students to the mystical teachings of founder Jean-Roger
135. Organizations-quasi-religious-ITO'S
135. Their ideologies are based on scientific evidence
136. Organizations-quasi-religious-ITO'S
136. TM, Scientology, and SSF claim to have solid scientific grounding
137. Organizations-quasi-religious-ITO'S
137. AA claims scientific backing for its assertion that alcoholism is a "physical, mental, and spiritual disease"
138. Organizations-quasi-religious-ITO'S
138. New Age-crystals emanate an electromagnetic field that has an ability to couple with the field of the human body, they

help the human form go into more harmonious alignment, and they realign the symmetry in the human form

Organizations-quasi-religious-ideological ambiguity

139. Organizations-quasi-religious-ideological ambiguity
    139. They are ambiguous about whether they are religious or secular
140. Organizations-quasi-religious-ideological ambiguity
    140. There are benefits and drawbacks to being associated with the term religious
141. Organizations-quasi-religious-ideological ambiguity
    141. This section of the article provides reasons why organizations might choose to present themselves as religious and/or secular
142. Organizations-quasi-religious-ideological ambiguity
    142. In this section of the article the relationship between organizational features and ideological ambiguity becomes clear

Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantages-financial

143. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage
    143. An advantage exists for organizations successful in calling themselves religious
144. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-financial
    144. In the U.S. it carries with it a financial advantage
145. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-financial
    145. They can solicit tax-deductible contributions
146. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-financial
    146. Property they own is tax-exempt
147. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-civil and labor
    147. It makes them exempt from certain regulations dictated by civil rights and labor legislation
148. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-civil and labor
    148. They may take religion into consideration in hiring employees
149. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-financial
    149. L. Ron Hubbard was accused of declaring Scientology as a religion for financial reasons
150. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-financial
    150. Scientology was rejected as a religious organization on the grounds that it is organized to make a profit
151. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-financial
    151. Non-profit charities are required to file annual financial reports but churches are not

Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantages-nonfinancial

152. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-nonfinancial
    152. There are some nonfinancial practical reasons to claim a religious label
153. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-nonfinancial
    153. The clergy is exempt from military service and members can claim conscientious-objector status more easily
154. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-nonfinancial
    154. Organizations can conduct healing and therapy practices without fear or scrutiny by regulatory agencies

155. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-nonfinancial
    155. In 1963 the FDA raided the Founding Church of Scientology in DC and seized their E-meters, charging that Scientology was making false claims about their therapeutic efficacy
156. Organizations-quasi-religion-religious label-advantage-nonfinancial
    156. Scientology argued successfully before the U.S Court of appeals that because it qualified as a religion, the E-meter was not subject to FDA regulation
157. Organizations-quasi-religion-religious label-advantage-legitimacy
    157. The most practical advantage has to do with the legitimacy conferred upon groups
158. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-legitimacy
    158. Organizations and leaders are held in high esteem and can benefit from the respectability the label implies
159. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-legitimacy
    159. L. Ron Hubbard said that "parliaments don't attack religions"

Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantages-existential

160. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-existential
    160. Organizations may have existential reasons for representing themselves as religious
161. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-existential
    161. They claim the label because it feels right to them
162. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-existential
    162. ITO'S create an atmosphere of institutionalized awe, giving members a sense of reality that exists beyond themselves
163. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-existential
    163. Institutionalized awe is almost inevitably expressed in superempirical terms
164. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-existential
    164. The sense that one is nothing compared to the power and majesty of the group is generally experienced and expressed through religious idiom
165. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-existential
    165. This observation is reminiscent of Durkheim's argument that the source of reverence for the sacred is to be found in the awe inspired by participation in the collectivity
166. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-existential
    166. Members may describe their group as spiritual or religious because the experiences they have within the group strike them as being close to or identical to what they understand religious experience to be
167. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-existential
    167. Group experiences may explain why core members of certain groups see the group as religious while fringe members do not
168. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-existential

168. As adepts get more involved they may experience more heightened levels of transcendence and institutional awe and may come to feel that religious symbolism provides the most suitable means of expressing this

Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-disadvantage -practical

169. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-disadvantage
    169. Practical and existential reasons are discussed in this part of the essay
170. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-disadvantage-practical
    170. The authors begin with the practical reasons
171. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-disadvantage-practical
    171. The prototypical form of the religious organization in the United States is the denomination
172. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-disadvantage-practical
    172. For an organization to present itself as a religious organization is tantamount to presenting itself as one denomination among many
173. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-disadvantage-practical
    173. TM avoided the religious label to have the broadest recruitment base possible
174. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-disadvantage-practical
    174. AA and Compassionate Friends may fear that being too closely identified with a particular creedal statement might alienate some ndividuals who would benefit from membership
175. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-disadvantage-practical
    175. The label may be viewed negatively, especially by those who do not espouse the transcendent worldview that is recognized by the American folk definition as real religion
176. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-disadvantage-practical
    176. A spokesperson from Forum explains that one reason speakers avoid identifying Forum as a religion is that some people might "be turned off by the word religion"
177. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-disadvantage-practical
    177. There are some services the government may not provide because of the Constitutional prohibition against the establishment of religion
178. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-disadvantage-practical
    178. Once TM was declared a religion it couldn't offer instruction in the public schools
179. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-disadvantage-practical
    179. Many of AA recruits are referred by the courts
180. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-disadvantage-practical
    180. The courts would be less likely to refer those convicted of DWI and other offenses if AA were thought to be a religious organization
181. Organizations-quasi-religious-nonreligious label-advantage-legitimacy
    181. A nonreligious label bestows a different type of legitimacy than a religious label does
182. Organizations-quasi-religious-nonreligious label-advantage-legitimacy
    182. To be accepted as legitimate therapy, they may have to distance themselves from their more religious tendencies

Organizations-quasi-religious-nonreligious label-advantage-practical

183. Organizations-quasi-religious-nonreligious label-advantage-financial
    183. It may also confer financial benefits
184. Organizations-quasi-religious-nonreligious label-advantage-financial
    184. Religions don't qualify for third-party medical payments while therapies do
185. Organizations-quasi-religion-nonreligious label-advantage-business
    185. Many human potential organizations offer their services to corporations interested in increasing worker production
186. Organizations-quasi-religious-nonreligious label-advantage-business
    186. Businesses are more likely to hire a secular consulting firm than a religious sect

Organizations-quasi-religious-nonreligious label-advantage-existential

187. Organizations-quasi-religious-nonreligious label-advantage-existential
    187. There may be existential reasons for rejecting the religious label
188. Organizations-quasi-religious-nonreligious label-advantage-existential
    188. Members join for therapeutic benefits
189. Organizations-quasi-religion-nonreligious label-advantage-existential
    189. Worldly orientation leaders and followers who associate religion with otherworldly concerns may not feel the label fits
190. Organizations-quasi-religious-nonreligious label-advantage-existential
    190. Religion in America is often compartmentalized
191. Organizations-quasi-religious-nonreligious label-advantage-existential
    191. Religion in America is relegated to a particular sphere of life (church on Sundays) and insulated from others (work)
192. Organizations-quasi-religious-nonreligious label-advantage-existential
    192. They see it as their mission to reform all of members' lives and not just part of them
193. Organizations-quasi-religious-nonreligious label-advantage-existential
    193. Adherents think of their own beliefs as being scientific and may find the religious label inappropriate because they think of religion as unscientific
194. Organizations-quasi-religious-nonreligious label-advantage-existential
    194. Adherents of quasi-religious belief systems may think of religions as being mutually exclusive
195. Organizations-quasi-religious-nonreligious label-advantage-existential
    195. One cannot be a Catholic and a Presbyterian, but a member of SSF can be a Presbyterian
196. Organizations-quasi-religious-nonreligious label-advantage-existential
    196. Such a person might conclude that if Presbyterianism is a religion SSF must not be

Organizations-quasi-religious-significance

197. Organizations-quasi-religious-significance
    197. How important are they?
198. Organizations-quasi-religious-significance
    198. Reliable statistics on membership are not available but impressionistic evidence suggests that the appeal is great
199. Organizations-quasi-religious-significance
    199. Hurley reports that AA had 804,00 American members in 1986
200. Organizations-quasi-religious-significance
    200. Hurley asserts that there are twelve million people in five hundred thousand self-help groups, some of which would qualify as quasi- religions
201. Organizations-quasi-religious-significance
    201. Scientology claims a membership of over six million, but outside observers estimate it's below one million
202. Organizations-quasi-religious-significance
    202. Almost a million people had been initiated into TM by 1977
203. Organizations-quasi-religious-significance
    203. Melton calls the occult groups the most important segment of American alternative religion
204. Organizations-quasi-religious-significance
    204. Shirley MacLaine's book on New Age themes sold over 8 million copies, and one quarter of all Americans say they believe in reincarnation
205. Organizations-quasi-religious-significance
    205. Lifespring, Arica Training, and est can each boast that 200,000 people have been trained
206. Organizations-quasi-religious-significance
    206. In a survey of the Montreal area, Bird and Reimer found that 31.7 percent of their sample had some involvement in "new religious and para-religious movements," most of which would be classified as quasi-religions

Organizations-quasi-religious-implications

207. Organizations-quasi-religious-implications
    207. The American folk definition is beginning to lose its hold over us and the line between religion and nonreligion is getting fuzzier
208. Organizations-quasi-religious-implications
    208. What does the appeal of quasi-religions and the blurring of distinctions between religion and nonreligion tell about religious trends in American society?
209. Organizations-quasi-religious-implications
    209. Religious trends in American society is worthy of discussion, but is confined to a few suggestive comments
210. Organizations-quasi-religious-implications

210. The appeal of quasi-religions suggests that large numbers of people are not finding satisfaction with the transcendent worldviews offered by traditional religious options

211. Organizations-quasi-religious-implications
211. Dissatisfaction with a transcendent worldview may be due in part to the fact that globalization has resulted in greater exposure to religious ideas outside the Judeo-Christian tradition

212. Organizations-quasi-religious-implications
212. Dissatisfaction with a transcendent worldview may also be due to increased privatization of American society, which may have lead to people looking inside themselves instead of outside themselves

213. Organizations-quasi-religious-implications
213. Their practical orientation suggests that a number of Americans feel out of control, who feel that the est trainer is right when he tells them," Your lives don't work, assholes"

214. Organizations-quasi-religious-implications
214. The appeal to science in many of these suggests that, although modernization may have lead to alienation and loss of meaning, the new quest for meaning is heavily influenced by the modernization and secularization of contemporary society against which it revolts

Appendix B
Corresponding Student Critique

In their article, "On the Margins of the Sacred," authors Greil and Rudy examine the phenomenon of organizations that seemingly fit somewhere between the realm of religious and secular in nature. Identifying these organizations as quasi-religions, the authors clearly defined how they have become increasingly acceptable within the spectrum of how Americans "do religion." They further justify how these quasi-religions conform to generally accepted substantive and functional definitions of religion. Yet, while providing legitimate examples of these quasi-religions, they fall short in their interpretation of why these organizations have come to prominence in recent decades and how they have replaced those traditional religious values that are so much a part of the American way of life.

While the authors quote impressive patterns of growth in quasi-religious membership during the 1970's and 80's, they ignore a similar growth witnessed within traditionalist denominations during the same period, particularly those with strong fundamentalist roots, seeded deep in Christian ideologies.

As most of the sampled quasi-religions are essentially variations of self-help or therapeutic groups in nature, the authors have used them to examine how these organizations have used traditional religious concepts as tools to insulate themselves against the advances of modern society, full of science and technology. By limiting their analysis to characteristics designated as "sort of" religious, such as commitment and identity transformation, they ignore how these are some of the most basic structural elements that provide the basis for the religion institution. Furthermore, they ignored the juxtaposition of religion structural relationships between traditional values and a society caught up in the forward movement of modernity.

In an attempt to identify a common link between quasi and conventional religions, the authors have relied on the reader's acceptance of the "sort of" form of thinking laid down in their explanation of the substantive and functional definitions of religions. If these definitions are to be accepted, so then must civil religions and various forms of nationalism be incorporated into the characterization of "sort of" religions, therefore, making this an essential social ingredient that is causal to the general structure of society and to everyone involved within that society, especially the Sociologist. By limiting themselves to the perceptions of individuals, the authors neglect the effectual elements that are the structure of religion. One of the strongest forces within American society, religion it is based within the Christian foundations of the country. It is these same structural elements that allows emergent properties such as quasi-religions to be identified. Yet, the authors have allowed their definition to become tainted by basing their hypothesis on how individual human behavior relates to the concepts of religion.

In closing, I feel that, although the authors have attempted to introduce a logical argument toward their theory of quasi-religions, they have ignored or simplified too many facets of religion relates to the critical function of the society. While is easy to see the deterioration of values and practices within a society, it is all too often blamed on a loss of religion by the citizenry. Yet, as society becomes more technical and complex, there develops a need for institutions to return to the fundamental elements of their core beliefs, therefore allowing an adjustment period to the advances of modernity. The authors are either ignoring this or refusing to accept this basic historic ingredient of the struggle between religions and modernity, and in doing so, they allow one of the strongest components of religion to evade them.